

IN the second of a series of Tuesday lunchtime public lectures at the Royal Academy, *Designer* magazine editor Alastair Best told of his last meeting with that enigmatic figure Norman Foster in 1968.

Norman and Wendy had disbanded Team 4 and they had just put carpet on the floor of a cannery factory to turn it into premises for a computer company, a gesture of democratisation matched for Best only by the low-tech solution for creating lounge chairs out of office chairs with the aid of a hacksaw.

Even in 68, Foster wasn't cast in the clichéd architects mould; not for him the green cord suit. Instead, Best met a gum-chewing, crew-cut, sneaker-wearing 33-year-old; his hunch that this man was heading for greatness turned out to be "spectacularly correct".

Best traced Foster's projects from the modest early work for Modern Art Glass at Thamesmead, for Fred Olsen at Millwall Docks and for Milton Keynes Development Corporation at Bean Hill ("well planned but failed symbolism"), to the recent vast projects for the BBC, the Hongkong Bank and the British Airports Authority.

The glimpse of Foster's output on show in the exhibition is but a small part of a com-

WHEN the Association of Consultant Architects annual conference last Friday was set up, Raymond Andrews was in line for the next RIBA presidency unop-

posed — but Rod Hackney's 11th-hour nomination put his keynote speech in a different perspective. Andrews took the opportunity to launch his man-

festo, accompanied by a mild rebuke to Hackney for his joint RIBA/UIC candidacy.

First, however, came the tale of Andrews, Downie & Partners and

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CHARLES KNEVIT gave a thoughtful and thought-provoking account of recent changes in what gets built and why, highlighting American instances of community funding for commercial projects and the changing attitudes among architects and developers in their responses to inner-city projects.

CONFERENCE chairman Oliver Willmore's summary of the day's proceedings centred on the concept of risk. How much can the financial institutions be expected to take? For the former, he suggested, enough to feel uncomfortable, though he acknowledged that some individuals were better suited to a life of uncertainty and unpredictability than others.

The conference theme was a timely subject to choose, to the credit of the ACA, and most of the audience shared the enthusiasm and conscience of most of the speakers. Time will tell how many really want to learn the new tricks.

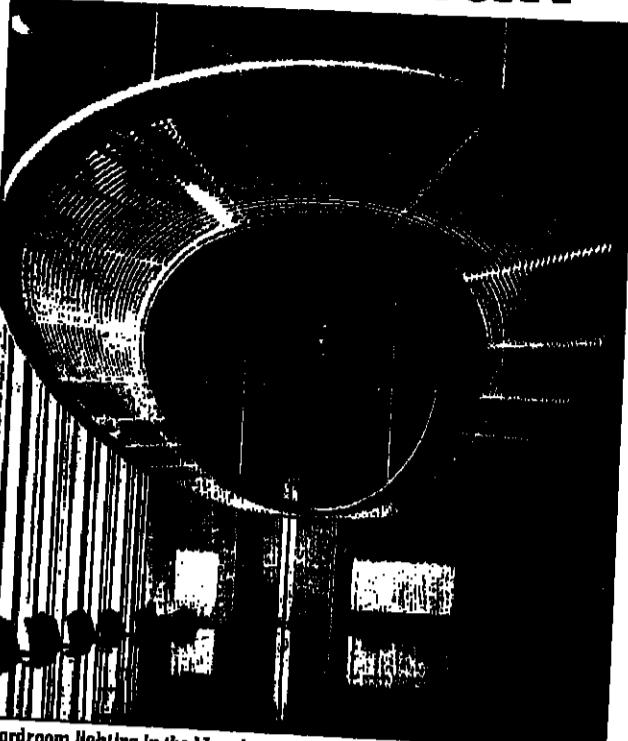
Ian Latham

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Ian Latham on the Best view of Foster at the Royal Academy.

Foster fan



Boardroom lighting in the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank by Ercol, co-sponsors of the Royal Academy exhibition.

prehensive and compelling body of work, so Best's survey gave an invaluable insight.

With the abandonment of the Hammersmith and Langham Place projects, this country still has just one Foster public building — "the shed to end all sheds" for the Sainsbury's at East Anglia — while Nimes and Frankfurt press ahead with competition-winning projects for their "Beaubourg of the South" and an international athletics stadium.

Best confessed to some degree of disappointment with the BBC scheme, a "nagging feeling that it wasn't quite right", and he sensed that the countless trial models for the Nimes Media-technique suggested some hesitancy at approaching problems on sensitive inner-city sites.

But in his new proposals for Stansted, Best considers that Foster is back on form — "it's exactly the kind of building he'll be very good at". Diagrammatically, the terminal building will be strikingly simple, from arrival through to departure passengers remain at ground level and move in stages directly towards or away from the aircraft. All servicing is organised below ground level.

Air travel, claims Best, will be brought back to basics and modern architecture, prematurely killed off by Charles Jencks in 1972, will be shown to be very much alive and kicking.

The workmen came armed with written instructions from Merton to "officially vandalise" No 28 Queens Road.

The council now claims to be

"in partnership" with Speyhawk, whose scheme by BDP is based on demolishing everything on the Wimbledon town

hall site that is not listed.

The other contend-

er, which opens on

ember 25, is Greycourt

scheme, by Terry Fun

based on having the

shopping on a site next

road from the town to

conserving all the build-

Merton council now

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Commission, English

Civic Trust, Vice

Society and some 20

residents' association

against Speyhawk and

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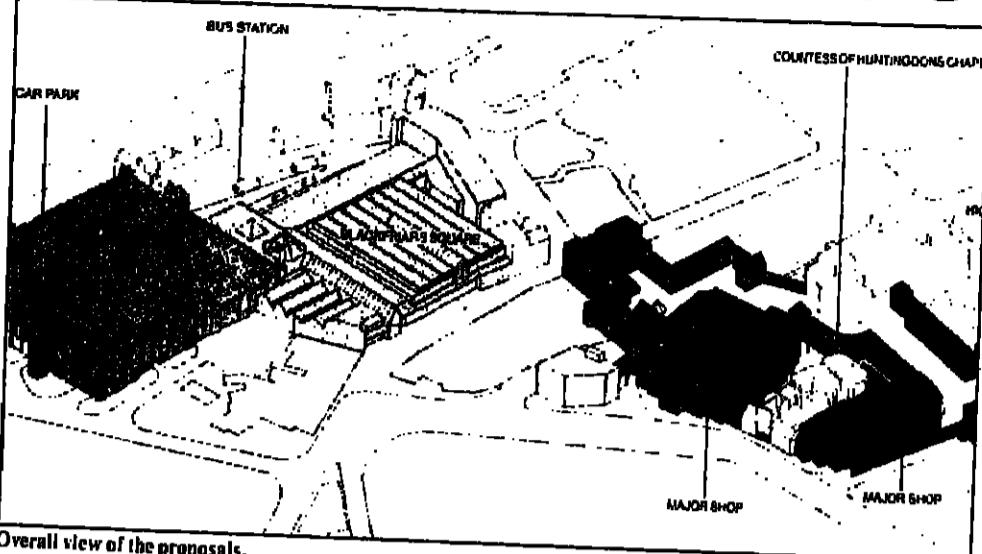
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RFAC attacks Gibberd's Worcester centre scheme



Overall view of the proposals.

THE Royal Fine Art Commission has attacked Frederick Gibberd & Partners' revised design for a new town-centre shopping scheme in Worcester.

The RFAC is "dismayed" by what it calls "arbitrary and whimsical" aspects of the scheme.

But the architects have described the RFAC's comments as "entirely unfounded".

The City of Worcester is partnering Centrovincular Estates in the development.

Centrovincular submitted a detailed planning application in December 1984, and discussions have been taking place since on the final form of the scheme.

The architects presented the final version to the RFAC on



The new car park — "whimsical forms".

September 24. Its current criticisms stem from that presentation.

According to commission chairman Norman St John Stevens, the decision to demolish the existing Blackfriars car park should have been used as an

By Lee Mallett

opportunity to incorporate the bulkier elements of the scheme, so that lower-density development could take place around the listed Countess of Huntingdon's church.

The RFAC also strongly objected to the "high-level" deck which services the scheme from the first floor, because it causes "a large part of the shopping mall to be covered".

However, he disagrees with the RFAC's comments on the high-level service deck and recommend that they are ignored.

St John-Stevens said the commission found "the design of the new Blackfriars car park unacceptable and its arbitrary and whimsical forms inappropriate to its function and unworthy of its prominent position on the riverfront".

Frederick Gibberd & Partners, stung into a formal response, have issued a statement which points out that the new car park will be $\frac{1}{2}$ storeys lower than the existing one (although it will hold 230 more).

To put the larger stores at the Blackfriars end of the scheme would reduce their retail value too much and increase the height of this part of the scheme by two storeys, they say.

Hiller Parker, the developer's advisers, say retailers would not be interested in smaller units around the chapel without the presence of the larger stores.

On the RFAC criticisms of the car park design, the architects said: "We do not accept

that the proposed for either inappropriate function or arbitrary".

The pitched roof is designed to break the skyline of what would otherwise be a large monolithic structure. The cars have projecting balconies emphasising various entry points into the building."

But Stuart McNiddle, Worcester city architect and planning officer, agrees with RFAC's points about the park, and when Centrovincular's planning application goes to committee meeting on October 21, it is likely he will recommend that Frederick Gibberd & Partners re-examine the design.

However, he disagrees with the RFAC's comments on the high-level service deck and recommend that they are ignored.

As a measure of efficiency, he suggests applications processed per staff member should not fall below 100 and that 65 percent of applications should be dealt with within eight weeks.

Also, committee cycles could be shortened and more decisions delegated to officers.

According to sources within the council, he faced a total of nine charges, of which seven were dismissed.

He was found guilty of "disobeying a management order", which is classed as misconduct and could only result in censure, and of persistently talking to the press — a sackable offence.

The more serious charge is usually only used against staff who have divulged council secrets and Drummond maintains that he only passed on details relating to his personal case.

The hearing was conducted by council officers and it is expected that Drummond will lodge an appeal which would be heard by a panel of three councillors.

Speaking at a seminar on revised Building Regulations in Bradford, he said: "Every building today is a compromise because at planning application stage it has to conform to the often different requirements and demands of the many bodies and regulations involved."

The competition is open to students in all the main built disciplines.

Their brief is to come up with energy-conservation measures for the swimming pool at the Birmingham Olympics.

Details: JB Pattison, Design Publicity, 277 St John's Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL7 0NT. Tel: 061 9099.

£7,000 up for grabs

... but rigid rules slated

THE mediocrity of many recent British buildings is due largely to rigid interpretation of building and planning regulations, according to Leslie Webb, a regional chairman of the RIBA.

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The country's biggest and most ambitious planned centre, the four-storey Runnymede International Shopping Centre designed by Building Design Partnership, is in the green belt.

Like many of the schemes proposed, Runnymede is on the M25 London orbital motorway.

Developer Arc Properties realised that if Runnymede was to be built it would need a sympathetic environment minister to give it the green light.

It is understood the university is considering amending its scheme.

Planning strategy praised

CUTTING staff is not the way to get value for money in planning departments, according to John Banham, the Audit Commission controller.

In an article in *Town & Country Planning* this month he says that vision, strategy and service are what is needed.

He believes planning needs a sense of direction and praises the paper *A new vision for Thamesdown* as one of the best advertisements for local government he has seen.

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The hearing was conducted by council officers and it is expected that Drummond will lodge an appeal which would be heard by a panel of three councillors.

Friction between Drummond and the council began after Herbert Meyer, Lambeth's practice manager, was suspended for alleged misconduct.

Drummond was suspended after he spoke to national papers about the case and criticised the council.

In June another member of the architects department, Nalgo

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Scots pioneer

The Prince of Wales opened Scotland's first self-build housing scheme this week. The project was undertaken by the Colquhoun Street Residents Association, Rod Hackney & Associates and Stirling District Council in an effort to alleviate the need for council housing in the area.

Council leader Michael Connarty commissioned Rod Hackney to look at other tenure options than local authority housebuilding. The architects identified a group of people on the waiting list who were prepared to set up a residents association and cooperative to use their own management and building skills on local authority land to provide 36 homes.

Once the finances were organised with two building societies so that people on the dole could get mortgages and buy the land at a nominal value, skilled workmen from various building trades were employed by the residents to teach their skills.

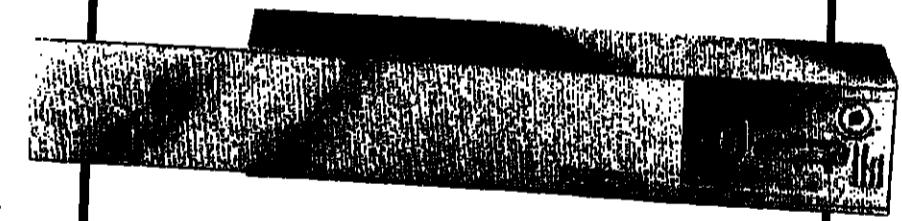
Royal walk-about.



Left to right: Prince Charles, Michael Connarty and Rod Hackney discuss the hands-on practicalities.

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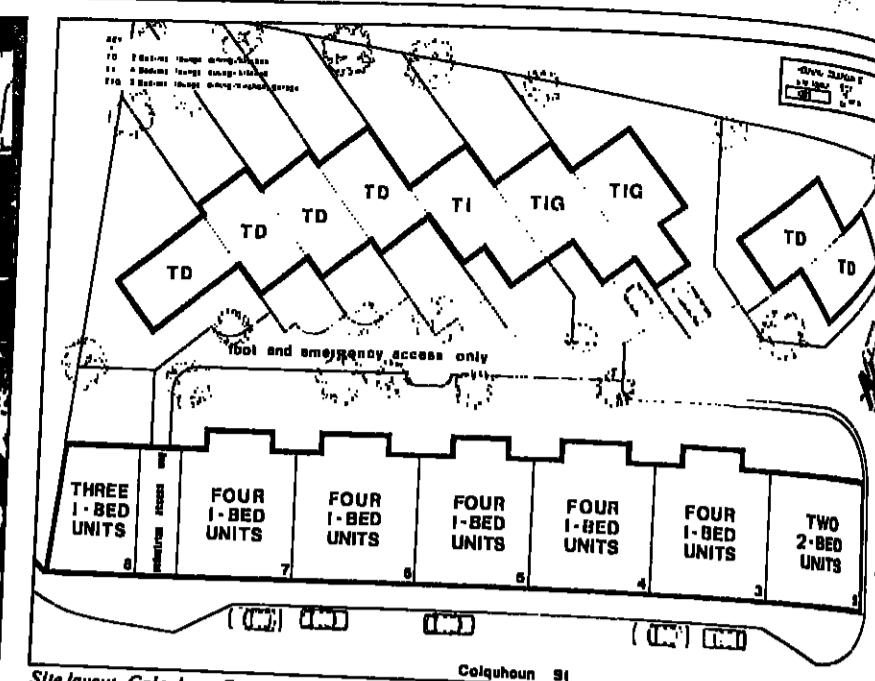
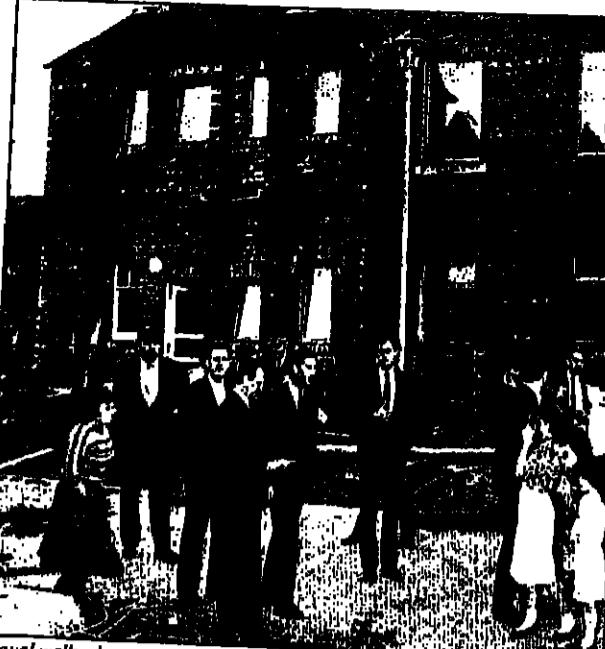


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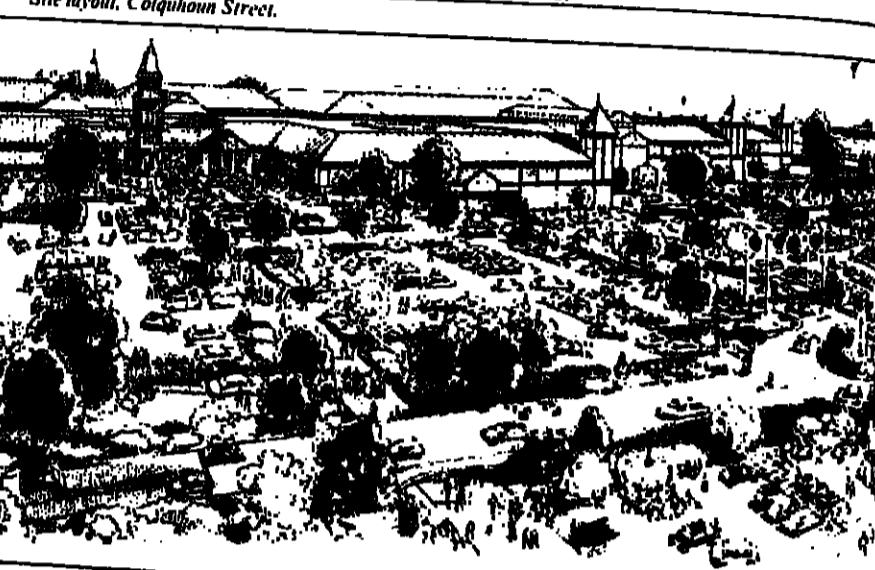
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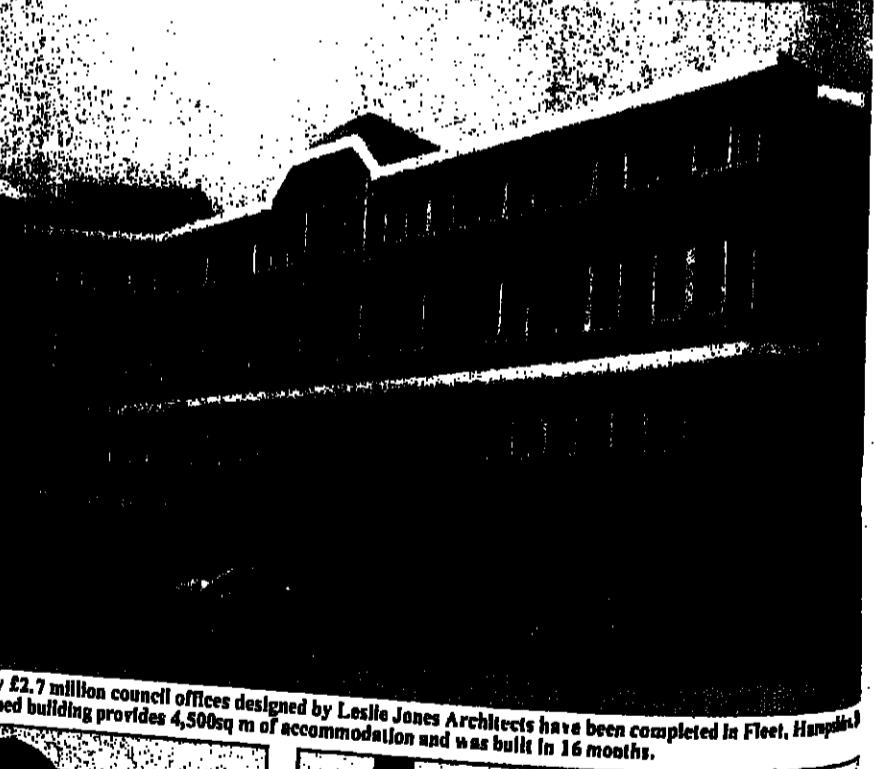
Site layout, Colquhoun Street.



Benoy's on hospital shortlist

A scheme designed by Gordon Benoy & Partners has been chosen from a shortlist of three by the South West Regional Health Authority for the redevelopment of the Digby Hospital site near Exeter. The 57,000sqm retail and leisure

scheme would accommodate three nail bar units, a 10-screen cinema and parking for 5,000. The scheme will be a joint venture between the SWHSH and Shearwater Property Holdings.



New £2.7 million council offices designed by Leslie Jones Architects have been completed in Fleet, Hampshire. The shaped building provides 4,500sqm of accommodation and was built in 16 months.



Standing room only

This stand-in chair by Sven Gjestrud and Parcabel seating by Sven Gjestrud are just two of the designs by Norwegian designers taking part in the 30th exhibition at Earls Court from October 16-22. The show brings together international designers, manufacturers, retailers and students and will feature meetings, displays and a seminar led by the Norwegians. Their acknowledgement as merely Scandinavian. Gjestrud and Dyrhaug are furniture designer Jane Dillon, Trelawny Polytechnic tutor Peter Hains, interior designer Brian Johnson in the Bridging the Gap seminar on Oct 21. Details: Amanda Clark, 01-373 4537.

BD/10.86

Infill

Starting Price

View from the top

DEAR Mr Price,
My staff at Marsham Street have suggested that now is the time for you to comment on my stewardship of the DoE. I've never heard of you myself but you might as well oblige.

NR.

I'd heard you were rather like that pop-eyed little architect grandfather — not so much fun though. Well, I think schizophrenia can be controlled but watch it. I was delighted in your acceptance of my Non-Plan Theory when you go and suggest a whole new bunch of development corporations à la LDCC for cities that were gently dying away. However few rules they have to obey, their very establishment is a major planning decision born, I would suggest, of election jitters more than anything else. They won't work. Also you must get your act together over the green belt — Willy W will help you if you don't find him too wet. Green belt has nothing to do with the colour or quality of grass — it's more to do with space at ground level. Think again about the Mickey Mouse of a new town north of Swindon — I'd put some more stuff over the tracks if I were you. Beta Minor, I fear.

Flights of fancy

HA SO, my social concern with a fascist facade is proving itself is it not? No one could have pulled Merseyside together as well as I did, eh? I reckon the Call won't be long coming. Yours in convivance, M H, (Oxon).

Michael, I realise that away from the Centre of Thinks one can get out of touch, but you must know that your grisly garden festival has lost £2m while Stoke-on-Trent looks like picking up a £3m debt. These candy-floss gestures can be costly — Cap'n Bob seems to be missing another £2m in Glasgow while the Vancouver Expo has a massive £1.56 million debt, despite its 22 million visitors. I reckon building helicopters that no one wants is cheaper.

Spirit of détente

ER, Cedric, we're having a bit of trouble with our new embassy in Moscow. Ivan and his boys want us to move out of our lovely building under pressure from their Georgian Group, no doubt, ha, ha (a joke, Cedric). Well we've been told to shack up with the Yanks further away. HMG thought you the ideal person to help us out.

As ever,
GH,
Carlton House Terrace.

Geoffrey, I thought you'd never ask. I've got just the thing on the drawing board at this moment. The point is that the Russkies

Cedric Price

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The Editor's Comment



that, since 1947, there is a presumption that the public has an interest in what is built in each area. This is one reason why the council bitterly opposes everything the London Docklands Development Corporation stands for; financial penalties are seen as a slightly thicker end of that anti-council wedge.

The problem is that too many councils, and Southwark is no exception, have gone to the other extreme in their obstruction of perfectly reasonable development. Planning permissions should not be a case of people holding guns to other's heads — one either side of the development control fence.

Guns and money

THE Government is trying to give developers an edge over local authorities in the matter of planning appeals. It is doing this by encouraging the pursuit of costs by aggrieved applicants where permissions appear to have been withheld for no good reason. This is fair enough as far as it goes, but who is to say, other than the lawyers who will make money as usual, what constitutes a good reason? An example of how confused thinking can become on this subject is proved by a recent appeal involving Cecil Denny Hilton & Partners on an office scheme just south of Tower Bridge. The case was interesting for more than one reason. Originally a refurbishment project, it became unworkable once VAT had been extended to this form of development. Planning permission was then refused for new-build on grounds of appearance, over-development and because it involved demolition of an

Flexiflame 140 It could be your biggest hang up!

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Which just goes to show, you don't have to be big to be better!

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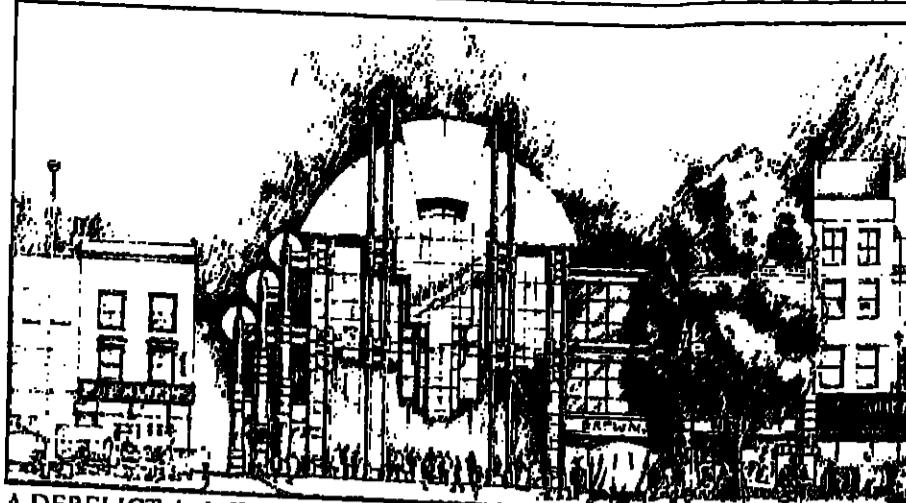
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Bright prospects for Whitechapel

A DERELICT site in Whitechapel, one of London's most deprived areas, is at last on the verge of rejuvenation.

Next month the council is due to choose a development scheme from a shortlist of three, ending a long period of uncertainty.

The 6.8ha site, on the Whitechapel Road opposite London Hospital, was the subject of years of fruitless wrangling between Tower Hamlets council and shopping centre developer Sam Chippindale.

No agreement could be reached and an invitation last year to other developers to produce retail/housing schemes for the site brought a flood of responses.

Twenty bids were whittled down to 12, but the controversy over the site did not die down.

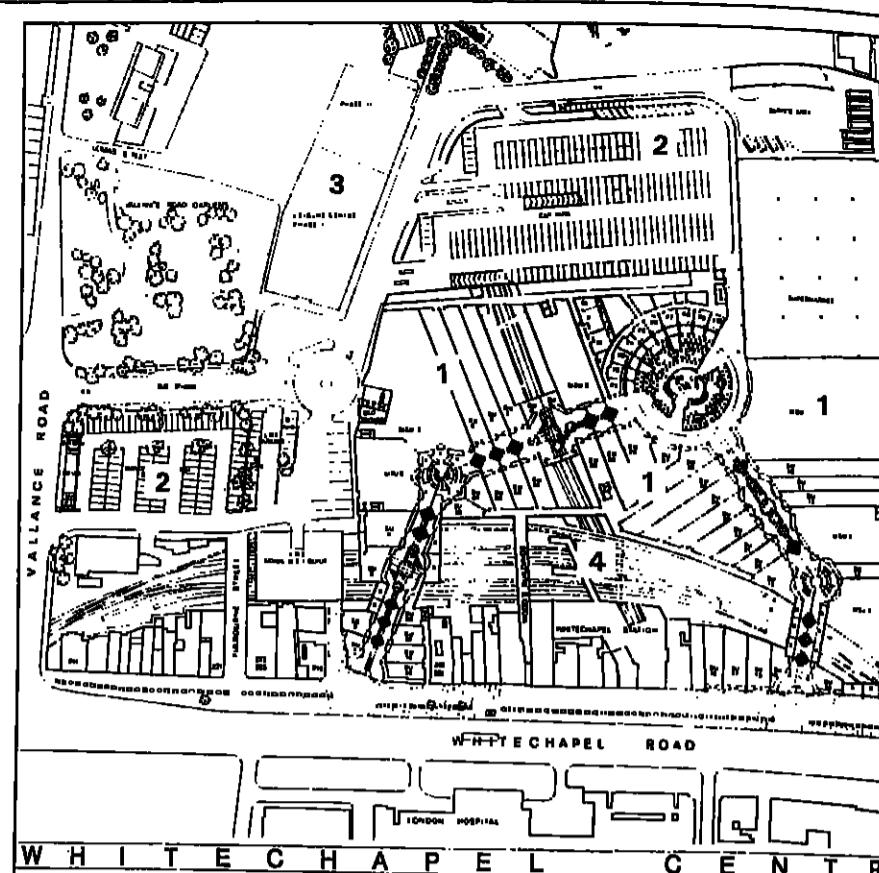
In choosing a shortlist of three, the council's planning committee raised a storm of protest by rejecting a local initiative by the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust (THET) on the chairman's deciding vote.

Two weeks later, at a full council meeting, the THET scheme was added to the shortlist.

Ironically, when the detailed proposals were submitted in July, the council once again had

Below the layout of the CZWG proposals showing the shopping centre (1), housing (2), light industrial workshops (3),

parking for 700 cars (4), recreation ground (5) and underground lines (6).



than envisaged in the brief.

The Carroll Group with architects the Engle Partnership had withdrawn, claiming the site was not viable.

Undoubtedly, the most grandiose of the three schemes is Chapman Taylor Partners' design for Pengap Consortium Commercial Developments and Countryside Properties.

For the housing the group has

bought in Regalton, which

would build 131 new houses and refurbish 300 more.

Tower Hamlets Environment Trust teamed up with Inner City Enterprises, the organisation set up by financial institutions to help develop inner-city areas.

Campbell Zogolovich Wilkinson & Gough designed their scheme with shopping centre specialist Gordon Benoy.

Their shopping centre is entered through an imposing glass and shining metal facade and houses a food court below a 25m-high glass dome, 25,000sq m of retail space and the latest spiral escalators from Japan.

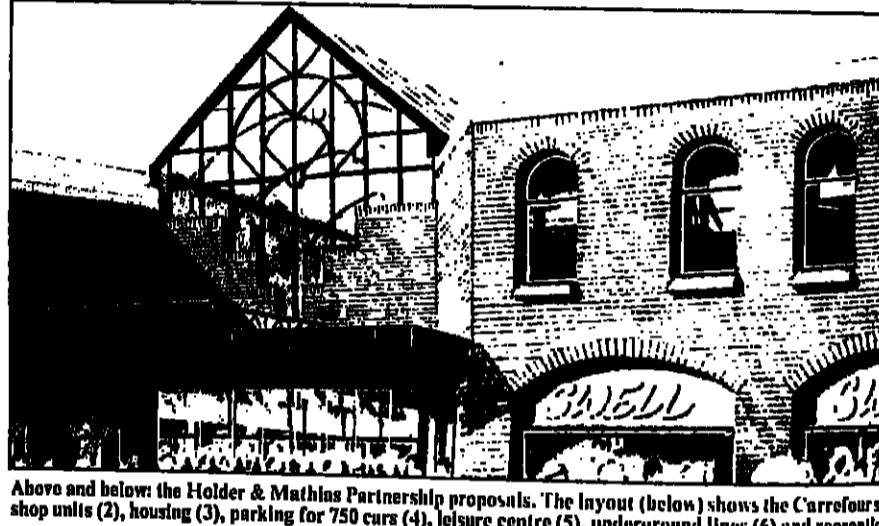
There will also be a 2,800sq m leisure centre containing a snooker hall and two cinemas and parking for more than 300 cars, in addition to 165 houses and flats designed by Feilden & Mawson.

Holder & Mathias Partnership have come up with an even more ambitious scheme involving decking over much of the Underground line crossing the site and acquiring far more land

itself.

It would provide 300 new homes including 71 five- and six-bedroom houses and 2,500sq m of light industrial space.

John Wood



Above and above left: Chapman Taylor Partners' proposals. The layout shows the shopping centre (1), parking centre (2), Underground lines (3), Housing for 165 families designed by Feilden & Mawson is not shown. The com-

pany's proposals showing the shopping centre (1), housing (2), light industrial workshops (3),

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SOANE RANGE

André Beaumont traces the history and describes the appeal of the small but significant Sir John Soane's museum.



The famous breakfast room.

IN September 1984, Peter Thornton succeeded Sir John Summerson as curator of the Sir John Soane's Museum. He inherited a small institution but one with a cultural richness way beyond its size and it is this quality which allows a curator to make of the institution what he will.

During Summerson's 39 years as curator the reputation of the museum rose progressively, gaining through association with his superlative criticism and from his gentlemanly encouragement of scholars and students.

This coincided with an increase in interest in Soane — an interest that can be attributed not just to fashion but also to the

fact that Soane's work has something of greater relevance to our time.

It is generally accepted that a broad backdrop of cultural richness cannot be created by a single individual but Sir John Soane, against all odds, has achieved this at the museum that cultural depth that permits his creation to survive, engaging every observer, through a perspective of time.

To achieve it he has not, of course, relied solely on the repertory of the architect. Some of the artistic questions are addressed in a manner familiar and available to literature. His manner of addressing the distant future or eternity draws on that of the pharaohs.

Yet Soane has had little need, except symbolically, of the

physical defences of the pharaohs to defend his treasures. He has used a means of safeguarding his treasures unavailable to the pharaoh — the museum, established by decree of Parliament. The treasures can both interact with posterity and be free from plunder.

In this house for architects, fixedly set to address a continuum of time, there is still scope for museum curatorship to best display and render the ensemble understandable. Peter Thornton, the new curator, has achieved this before as keeper at Osterley Park. Trained as an engineer, he was head of the furniture department at the Victoria & Albert Museum and keeper of both Osterley and Ham House before coming to the Soane Museum.

Part of the appeal and depth of the museum is that it is essentially a domestic home. Its domesticity is intrinsic to its character as a museum and its role as an architectural masterpiece. It is alive and requires people to interact with it. The first changes Thornton has made at the museum all reinforce its domestic quality.

A few months after assuming the curatorship, Thornton expressed great interest in restoring the breakfast room and dining room in No 12 — the Soane's first house in Lincoln's Inn Fields next door to the main museum building at No 13 with its famous breakfast parlour — to demonstrate more of the domestic nature of the home Soane lived in.

These rooms are not normally accessible to the visitor but the breakfast room has an airy trellis-pattern ceiling in poor condition, reminiscent of a room at Soane's country house, Pitshanger Manor, Ealing.

Restoration of these rooms, for opening to visitors, has had to wait until a way has been found to provide access to them, but domestic improvements to the fabric of No 13 have gone ahead. The inhabited caretaker's rooms, above the curator's office have

been refurbished and against domestic ledges, treads replaced when worn, the Piranesi drawings moved to behind shutters, picture room to protect from sunlight and the moved from the library Soane's intended refectory in the low-level me

Thornton's appointment of the Soane Museum with an increase in the men's funding of the £100,000 from an insubstantial £10 per annum, from which thing including salaries to be paid, to the present £20 per annum, which has little leeway for essential the structure. Nevertheless single item like the repair Axminster carpet in the would cost £17,000, so far from the dining room through to the library.

Another function of the museum is clearly as a resource for scholarship. Only 300 people a year at present use the 8,000-strong Adam drawings collection. Soane acquired the drawings in 1833 and he must have considered Adam an earlier kindred spirit, an innovator working within, but extending the borders of, the classical idiom. Soane added to his museum a cultural variety and another kind of architectural immediacy that in itself it did not possess.

The Adam drawings are always so striking in the manner in which they represent so closely, in two-dimensional form, the three-dimensional reality of the Adam's buildings. There is none of the intermediation of drawing conventions between drawings and reality found in modern architectural drawings. The rapport is also more direct than that found in their contemporaries' drawings. This rapport was helped by Robert Adam's increasingly linear style in his later years but equally it is found in his drawings of non-linear spaces, such as sections through circular staircases.

Of all Soane's acquisitions for his museum, that of the Adam drawings was the most enlightened. It signalled his acceptance into a museum, where all the objects were in a perspective fashioned by himself and all angled towards posterity, of objects of a collective stature that could stand quite independently of any frame of his own making. In purchasing them, he provided a second future purpose for the existence of his museum.

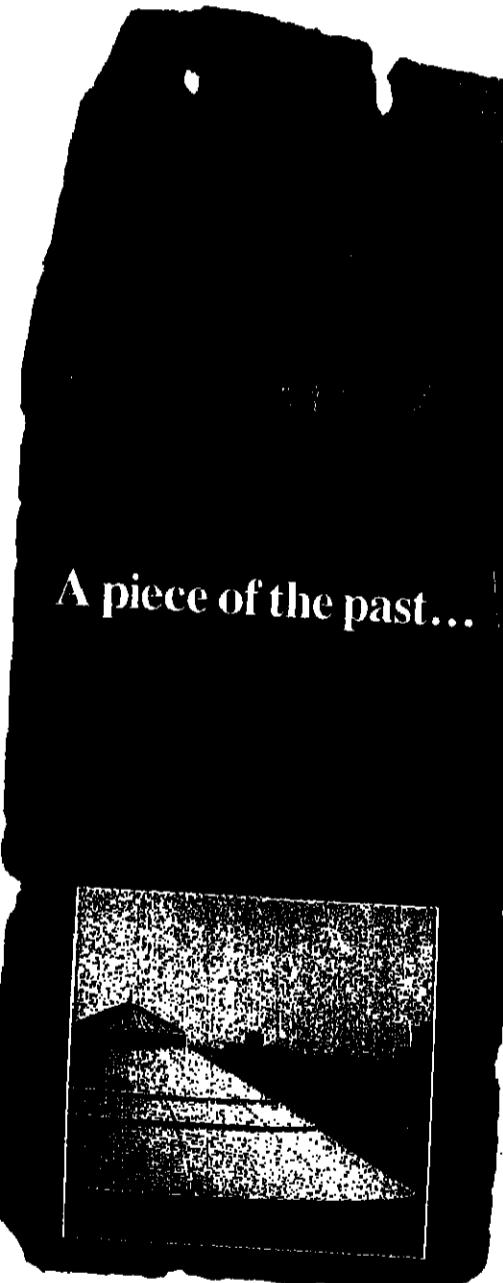
Peter Thornton enjoys the curatorship immensely. With his evident enthusiasm and measured judgment it is unlikely that the post could lie fallow. For the first nine months he worked at the museum full-time but as the post is a part-time one he took up the offer of a one-year research fellowship at St John's College, Oxford which he describes as being "without strings" like teaching duties. He has evidently enjoyed this work while at the same time preparing a book on the interior decoration aspects of the Italian Renaissance.

The Soane Museum is becoming a more clearly understood ensemble, interacting, as always intended, with the spectator of today, while remaining a reference point in Soane's long perspectives of time.



Detail of the fireplace in the library.

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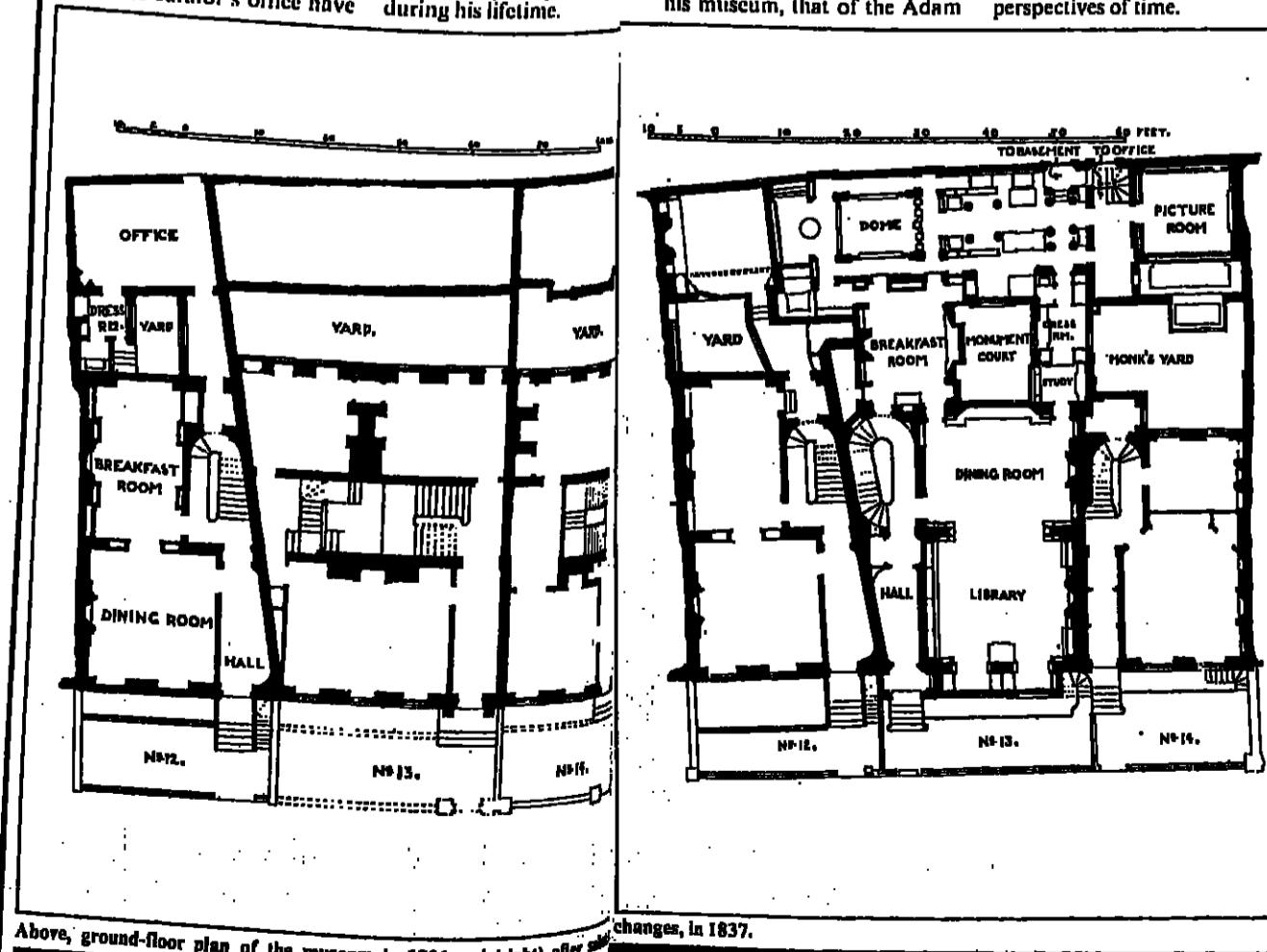
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Above, ground-floor plan of the museum in 1796 and (right) after changes, in 1837.



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Advertising

MEDIA AND THE MESSAGE

Thom Gorst examines architectural exploitation in advertising.

WHICH researcher in a century or two's time would ever think that the tower block had largely been discredited in the late 20th century?

Certainly on the evidence of the Sunday supplement advertisements, the office tower is one of the most attractive architectural images. Of all building types evoked, the skyscraper is equalled only by the stately home with "a touch of class".

The explanation for this comes from the products that are advertised in the glossies, and the readership they are aimed at. By far the most prestigious adverts are for cars, and pretty up-market models they are. It is natural to show them off alongside an office tower or a large country house.

Yet cigarettes, which come second in the league of architectural advertisers, also exploit the same towering building type, though in a more

glamorous way. Towers therefore either connote status — "you could be a top executive operating from this building if you drove one of our cars" — or glamour — "down in the streets is where it's happening".

Only rarely do advertisers exploit buildings in a way that isn't intended to make an association in the reader's mind. As part of the trend of promoting cigarettes using surreal images that make no reference at all to smoking, Rothmans introduced a stunning series of fantasy buildings.

Pretty Polly have also made very creative comparisons between their lacewear and Venetian gothic tracery.

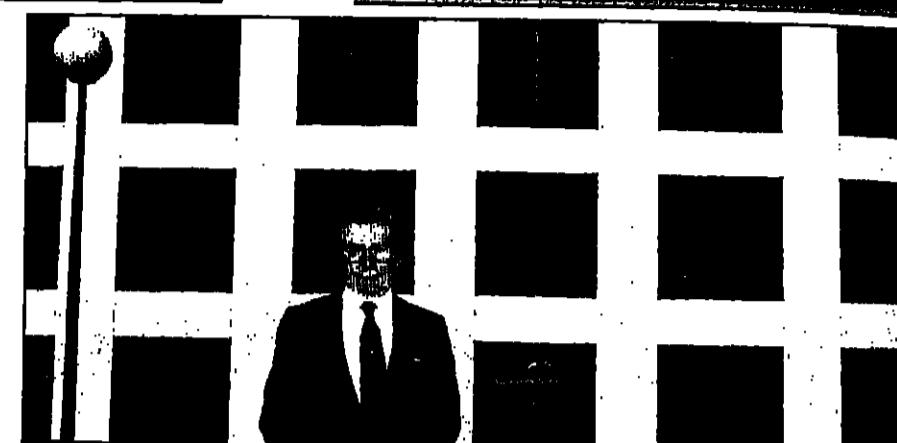
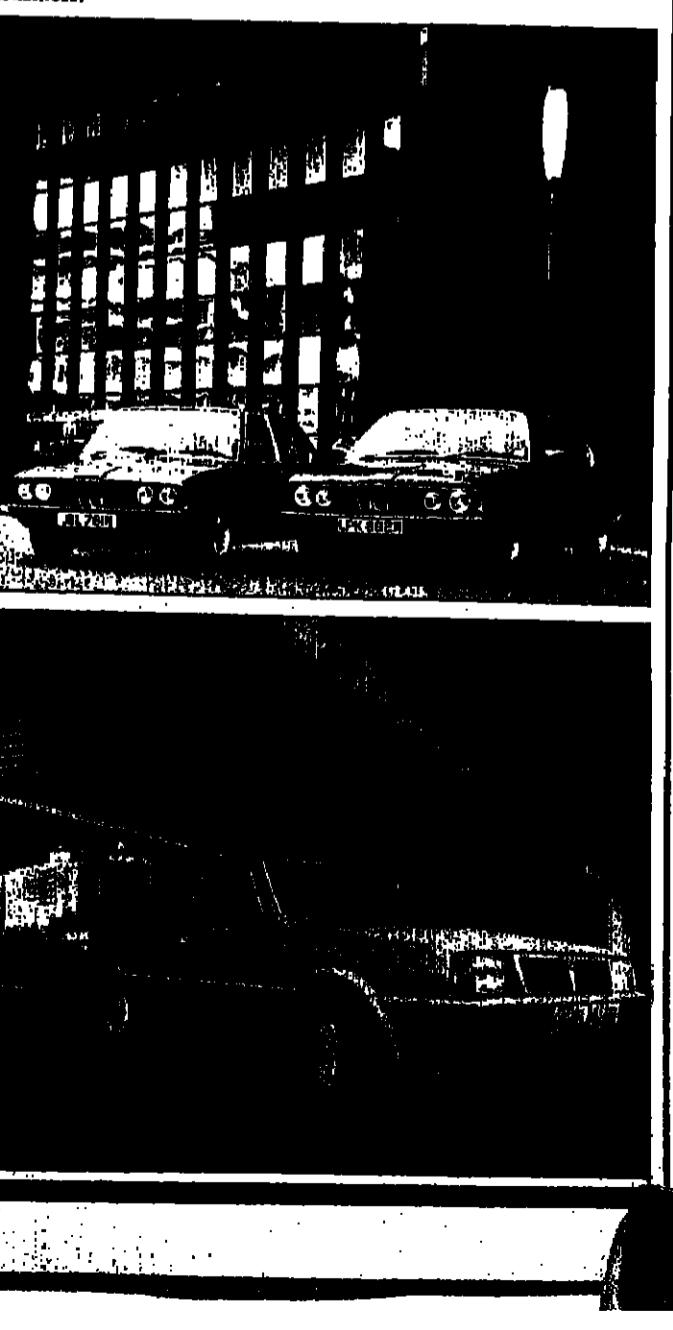
Sadly, though, it's status that the buildings are suggesting most of the time. And if it's not palace that the Sunday readership aspires to, then it's the office block.



Top executive city: This is the province of the motor car, and it is strictly male. The predominant colours in these adverts are the dull browns and possibly pasty blues that one associates with menswear departments in large stores. The cars are large and powerful and their size suggests status and the ability to get out of town quickly and away to the country home.

The buildings are in perfect harmony with the vehicles — not formally, but through association. The two BMWs parked outside the office building are, it is clearly suggested, chauffeur-driven limousines waiting for their extremely important payloads.

The retouched photo of a Lancia speeding beneath a bridge is saying something a little different. The car is not so sedate as the BMW, but it is a bit more sporty, and the owner enjoys driving it himself. The buildings in the background, which are incidentally an exceptionally lifeless group on the South Bank, are not so much offices that the car owner works in, but the sort of buildings that the executive passes on his daily business.



ALEXON IN MILTON KEYNES
by ROLPH GOBITS

Clean geometry: Two adverts promoting Milton Keynes are unashamed of MK's commercial architecture — strictly scale-less, repetitive, and trying hard to be devoid of any human reference, least of all a door or a window.

On one it's black holes in a pale cream framework. Clive Thornton, the former Abbey National general manager who is proudly pictured in front, could well be lying on some super-scale trivet in a microwave oven.

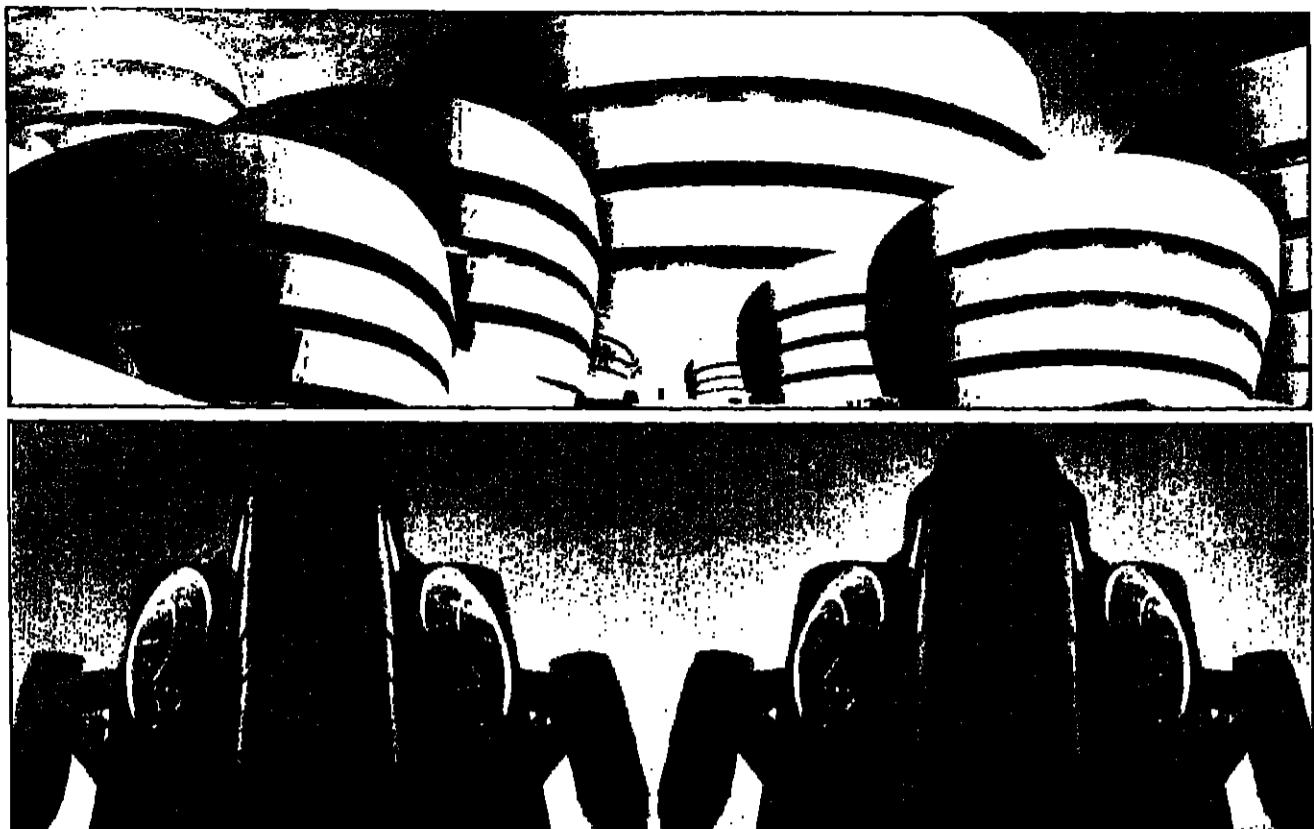
The Alexon ad shows an equally scale-less mirror-glass wall. Only the nameless woman gives it a reference, and she may just be there to hide the camera's reflection.

Architecture is the key to this advertising campaign, and the architectural contrast that hits the visitor to Milton Keynes is exploited fully:

On one hand the sanitised, extruded, faceless commercial buildings which suggest the cool efficiency of what goes on inside.

On the other hand there is nature. It is reflected in the mirror-glass and, probably just out of camera shot, there are those neurotically individualised houses and community centres that are supposed to give the place some character.

Advertising



The fantastic city: Rothman's legendary series was possibly the most architectural ever. Not even a subtle reference to the product is featured in the artwork.

Two utterly fantastic space module-like buildings are shown side by side, not only to suit the advert's horizontal format, but also because a pair of buildings so close and so unconnected, and yet so identical, would never happen in reality. It may be a pair of prying creatures, it may be a fleet of spaceships landing. The intention is that you shouldn't know, but just buy the cigarettes.

But what about the nine Guggenheims all clustered around a giant-scale staircase? — perhaps you can't see the three tiny figures in lab coats on the top step, and the palm trees, and the microscopic Egyptian-style entrance at the bottom of the largest Guggenheim. It is an extremely eloquent mixture of history book motifs.

John Player's also tries to sell cigarettes by associating them with bizarre architecture. In one a distant packet is seen through an arched opening that is crumbling apart. In another a packet of Superkings is displayed alongside a glass prism-building. One of the glazing panels has been smashed, and inside there is nothing but prison bars. Try detailing it.

Digital computers have also recently run a series of adverts using bare, dreamy interiors where even perspective doesn't follow earthly rules.



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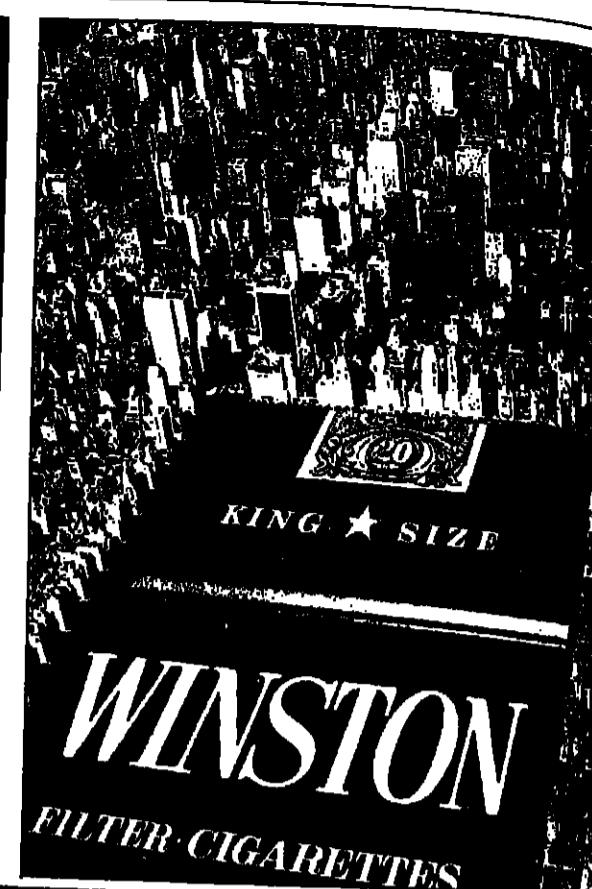
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Media and the message

The glamorous city: The city of towers is not just the workplace of extremely sombre executives; it is also highly glamorous. All of these adverts exploit the myth that there is a buzzing life among the office blocks. In the advert showing a woman's face next to some skyscrapers it's all just a bit too crude. The buildings look like rough models, and they are seen across a lake of water. The perspective is wrong. But the buildings don't have to work too hard to suggest the supposed glamour of the States, for the product is called "Manhattan". And what is a Manhattan — a two-speed, dual-voltage hair dryer! As for the Panasonic television, it carried a slogan that clearly bore some reference to the buildings on the screen. It may well also be one for us to take to heart — "The Squarer, the Better".



The glazed concourse which serves as the main focal point.



Overall view of the centre showing the Stobcross Crane (RFACS).

SQUANDERED OPPORTUNITY

Richard Carr on the controversial new Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre in Glasgow.

THE design of the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre on the north bank of the Clyde in Glasgow has been picked out for special criticism in the Royal Fine Art Commission's latest report.

Comparing the centre with the proposed scheme for the St Enoch's Centre in Glasgow, which the commission describes as bringing something modern and well-considered into the heart of the city, the report says:

"The same cannot be said of the Scottish Exhibition Centre. Undistinguished buildings in an industrial estate are one thing, lost opportunities in prominent positions are another matter. Aside from the amenity aspect, which is our principal interest, we are concerned that in the long run Scotland may acquire a second-rate image in the eyes of overseas visitors and investors."

And, as if to damn the building still further, the report included a photograph of the centre, with the comment: "In spite of the title of the development, the most impressive structure in the area is still the Stobcross Crane."

The Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre is a complex of five, interlinked halls and a seminar suite grouped around a central concourse with administration, banking and retail facilities. It occupies 26 hectares on what was previously the Queen's Dock in Glasgow, which was gifted to the centre by Glasgow District Council and then filled in with rubble from the demolished St Enoch's Hotel. The infill was dynamic-

ally impacted to form the site, which includes the centre itself, roads and parking for 3,500 cars.

Describing this phase of the project, the architects, James Parr & Partners, say their aim has been "to ensure quality of visitor experience by providing comfortable and efficient pedestrian links between exterior spaces and the buildings, as well as creating distinct and attractive approaches to the buildings for both pedestrians and motorists from the point of site entry and in progress towards the centre".

The landscaping is also intended, in the words of the architects, "to provide an appropriate setting for the centre by extending and expressing the scale of the buildings and the river in the form of the external spaces, as well as using the landscape structure to link the centre with significant existing features".

This is partly done by planting an avenue of deciduous trees to link the main pedestrian approach from Finnieston in the east to the main entrance to the centre in the west (which is done via an elevated footbridge), and to link the centre visually with the Old Customs House and the Clydeside walkway. The trees will also screen the major car park. In addition, there is a coniferous planting which runs in a north-south direction (thus at right-angles to the main avenue) "to provide shelter and improve the micro-climate surrounding the building and its main approaches".

The second phase of the

continued page 24



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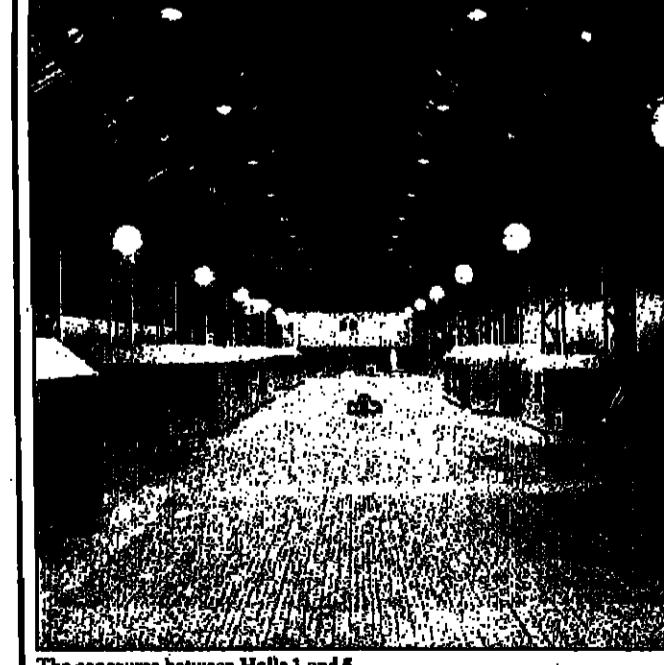
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The concourse between Halls 1 and 5.

Buildings

Squandered opportunity

from page 23

project was the building itself, whose five steel-framed halls are arranged in two groups parallel to the river in an east-west orientation on either side of the glazed concourse already mentioned. The shape of the complex springs, the architects say, "from a need to avoid flat-roof construction combined with the decision not to expose the main structure both for economical and practical maintenance reasons".

The roof has a lantern form ridge "to avoid untidy roof penetration and provide the large areas with air grilles", while Hall 4 "is lessened in mass from the outside by having sloping sides at the same angles as the perimeter roof detail. In this way, the huge mass of this element is simply integrated with the main roof form. The roof itself has been refined and

fine-tuned from the original basic trusses to provide a clean, strong form".

"Ancillary accommodation adjoining Halls 4 and 5," the architects continue, "use the same vocabulary of sloping roof form, ridge ventilators and bright wall cladding to forge the elements into an integral whole." The composition is also helped by giving the roof of the concourse a similar, angular form to that of the roof over the rest of the building.

In addition, a 2m-high band of glazing separates the red metal cladding of the complex from its silver, metal roof, except in the case of Hall 1, "and thus helps to lighten the considerable mass of this element by 'floating' it clear of the walls". The colours chosen are also important — silver, because it is energy efficient in solar terms, and telephone cables, "with a provision for natural lighting at



The principal auditorium, showing the retractable seating and stage.

as some other colours" and will help reduce the considerable mass of the building as viewed by pedestrians and visitors to the centre", and red "in order to provide vitality and interest throughout the year in this otherwise grey dockland setting".

But, despite all these brave, reasoning words and comforting sentiments, what the architects are actually describing is nothing more nor less than a very big shed.

Inside, the architects say, "the halls themselves follow the established formula for enclosures, efficiently serviced by under-floor trenches at 10m centres" which carry water and waste pipes, mains electricity and telephone cables, "with a provision for natural lighting at

clerkovsky level to assist exhibitors during the set-up period." All the concrete floors have a latex asphalt covering and a point-loading capacity of 10 tonnes, except in the concourse where the point-loading is limited to 5 tonnes.

"The brief calls," the architects continue, "for column-free spaces in all halls, except Hall 2, to allow for multi-purpose functions . . . which has been achieved in the most economical way by a series of lattice trusses which span 52.5m in the case of Halls 1 and 3, and 82.5m in Halls 4 and 5." The air-handling equipment is housed within the trusswork to minimise ductwork.

Flexibility within the centre is achieved by placing Halls 1, 2 and 3 on one side of the concourse, and Halls 4 and 5 on the other. Hall 1 is the principal conference auditorium, offering excellent facilities for lighting control, audio-visual presentations and simultaneous translation, being fully air-conditioned, carpeted and blacked out. A combination of linked seating and retractable seating provides for up to 2,000 people in front of a demountable stage and, although excellent visually and acoustically, so that the hall can be used for concerts, it has to be said that its auditorium is extremely wide and does not create a sense of intimacy. Altogether, there is 15,750sq m of space.

Hall 2, immediately adjacent, can be used on site for catering, or as a separate exhibition area providing 755sq m of space. Alternatively, it can be combined with Hall 3. This has a height of 8m and, with 2,315sq m of space, and is described as "a perfect medium-sized exhibition area".

On the other side of the concourse, Hall 4, with 10,065sq m of space and an elevated section in the roof providing for exhibits that are 20m high (or room for a circus Big Top), is the largest in the centre and can seat up to 10,000 people. As with Halls 2 and 3, Hall 4 can also be combined — this time with Hall 5, which provides 4,105sq m of exhibition space.

All the halls are served by 11 large access doors around the perimeter of the building, and have their own toilets, while Halls 4 and 5 are served by a restaurant and a fast-food bar, and have exhibitors' offices and lounges. On the first floor, above Hall 2, is a bar, restaurant, lounge and further offices, and also on this floor, at one end of the concourse, the seminar suite. This can be used as a single space seating up to 250 people, or as three separate areas. The administration offices, also on the first floor, are at the other end of the concourse, ie at the main entrance to the building.

The concourse itself, laid out like a covered boulevard, acts as the focal point to the complex and contains visitors' services — bank, car hire, travel agency and



The centre from the main entrance showing the glazed concourse and with the elevated roof line to the right.

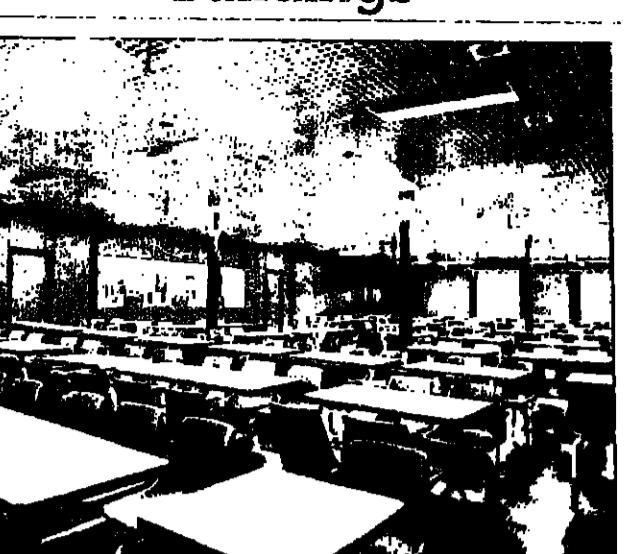
a free-standing frame of hollow-section circular steel which supports a 12mm-thick skin of clear glazing for its vertical walls and sloping roof. Given the very utilitarian nature of much of the rest of the centre, the bank stands out like a precious jewel.

There is no doubt that, in terms of an exhibition centre, the complex has much to offer with its 19,000sq m of flexible space — increased by a further 2,000sq m if the piazza outside is used — high roofs, unobstructed interior and multiplicity of services and accommodation. It is, the architects say, the result of three years' careful research during which visits were made to design teams and operators of similar centres throughout Europe, when many alternatives were examined and rejected because of operational weakness or cost limitations. The final design, the architects claim, "provides Scotland with an exhibition centre which can stand proudly with other contemporary international examples". Nevertheless, three questions remain to be asked about the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre.

First, why did it have to be built in such a hurry? The excuse for building a shed (and it is interesting to note that sheds are always a prominent architectural feature of depressions — cinemas and dance halls in the 1930s, exhibition centres, supermarkets and megastores in the 1980s) is that it had to meet a deadline imposed by last year's Scottish Motor Show. Thus, said Professor Alexander Youngson, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, the commission's objections to the design were ignored on the grounds that it was impossible to make detailed alterations to the plans because of the timescale of the project.

Secondly, what excuse was there for building it to such minimal visual requirements when most of the building was paid for by public money? Phase one, the site, included gifted land and cost £1.2m — £3m each from Glasgow District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council, and £6m from the Scottish Development Agency (SDA); and phase two, the construction, cost £24m, including one-sixth from the two local authorities, one-third from the SDA and one-third capital loan stock. The project also received an £11.5m grant from the European Regional Development Fund. Surely the taxpayer — the main source of the money — deserves better than this?

And thirdly, why is Scotland now so bad at developing its major river frontages? As the Royal Fine Art Commission's report says, the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre represents a failed opportunity and, in Youngson's words, "is architecturally inferior to similar projects in Denmark and Germany". Yet the site is magnificent. And the lost opportunity is now likely to be



The ground-floor restaurant.

revised version has been given a strong, vertical emphasis to make it visually more acceptable.

In the case of the centre, the trouble seems to be that the people with money — mainly councillors and bureaucrats — either do not care or have such limited visual expectations that they are prepared to accept what the architects put up to them.



The first-floor restaurant.

Dock in Glasgow is now being repeated in Dundee, which has one of the most magnificent river sites of any city in Europe. But that is another story...

Architects: James Parr & Partners; landscape architects: Ian White Associates; quantity surveyors: Turner & Townsend; civil & structural engineers: Thorburn Associates; main contractor: Bovis Construction (Scotland).

NEW RENDER TECHNOLOGY

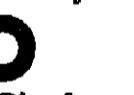


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Entrance doors to Hall 5 with concourse to the rear.



Hall 4. This shot, in particular, factory like nature of the building.

designed by James Parr & Partners, which is like a rather special glass box. The box contains a manager's office and clerical banking area, housed in



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MOST of the members of this institution are engaged in design. But what the term "design" means to most people in this country is depressingly narrow.

Last June I went to the Aspen Design Conference in Colorado. Since the first Aspen conference in 1951, it has become the leading design conference in the world. To be invited this year as a member of the team describing the best of British design to Americans in Colorado seemed a great honour. Everyone was very nice — yet I have rarely felt more disillusioned.

The line-up of speakers was immensely impressive, including David Hockney, Sir Hugh Casson, James Stirling, Norman Foster, Peter Reyner Banham and Pat Nuttgens.

The presentations were extremely polished as befitting such a talented group. They articulated a certain view of what it serves. Yet these presentations had absolutely nothing to do with that form of design which is necessary to provide enough satisfactory work for people in this country — nothing to do with producing useful objects. It was about packaging, not the product; style, not function; art school, not engineering.

These speakers represented the view that design involves co-ordinating the work of others — mainly to visual criteria — so it will sell well. Yet lurking at the back of their minds was an uncertainty about whether British values "design".

The quality of the most successful products have — be they drawing materials, cars, forklift trucks, windows, lifts or even buildings and bridges — is a sense of quality in a unified whole.

Then, the effectiveness gives rise to an aesthetic. If a Japanese tape deck is by far the most advanced, efficient and economic in the world it will not be long before the look of that tape deck becomes "the look" for tape decks; the look which expresses efficiency. As the Mercedes car does. Or bridges can. Then the aesthetic expresses the effectiveness.

Alas, British industry does not seem very effective at producing such goods. Yet the crazy thing is that the skills to achieve such success and satisfaction exist in Britain. Our car industry is a failure, yet we have engineers who design the fastest, safest and most reliable cars in the world. Our Royal College of Art-trained car body stylists are in demand in Germany, the States and Japan. They work in Mercedes-Benz and other successful car firms. If these two groups could work together in Britain as equals they could succeed. Yet our intellectual and economic class systems are such that it seems impossible. We have the skills but not the business or social structure and environment to revitalise our industry.

The building industry does not look much different. There are so many vested interests, misconceptions and false priorities both within and about the industry, which so affect how it works, that it does not produce good enough buildings or have a successful enough supporting product and equipment manufacturing industry. We have not had an environment to achieve the best for a long time and it does not look as if we are achieving one now. The public thinks that building design is about fashion and carried out by designers from artschools — if it is not done by architects it is done by surveyors — not about engineering and technical performance.

Until a few years ago the major post-war clients were government or local authorities. These consumers and their

ENGINEERING A CHANGE

Ted Happold became president of the Institution of Structural Engineers earlier this month. His inaugural address, which appears in part here, was a rallying cry to his profession. (Photos: Geoff Beeckman)

specifiers — mainly architects and surveyors — largely defined the nature of the UK building industry. The accent in this country was on social need — quantity building to reduce social inequality.

Now, not only have the clients and their expectations changed but there are also some extra dimensions to the situation. There is an awareness of technical failures in the past; there are immense refurbishment programmes; there is major importation of better designed or made foreign components and equipment into Britain with resulting unemployment; there are fashion changes; there is just a growing realisation that the population density in the UK is such that constructing anything here is more difficult than anywhere else in the world. Better technical performance requires better design, materials and construction methods. Better technology.

And better technology requires innovation. Why is it that the most innovative of my colleagues' and my own work — the timber lattice shells, the stone shells, the big tents, airhouses, flexible materials, even timber joints — were first developed for overseas? Here in Britain one seems to have such a full orchestra in the design team that the money is spent by the architect convincing the client, and little is left for the engineer or for convincing the approving body.

I put to you that this problem of achieving a satisfactory outcome at least partly exists because of us — and it is we, as structural engineers, who ought to be doing something about the situation if we believe our discipline has something to give to the prosperity of Britain.

Our skills and our opportunities were formed in the past. Our profession really started in the middle of the 18th century. At that time Great Britain was largely an agricultural country with a population of 7 million people. Probably no more than 5 per cent of the national income was available for new investment and to accumulate capital at such a rate could not produce more than a very slow addition to our wealth-producing equipment.

At the apex of society at that time were the big landowners, mainly Anglican by religion, who owned most of the nation's wealth yet who often engaged in consumption rather than investment. At the bottom were the agricultural workers, later to become the manufacturing workforce. In between were two active groups. The first group was an aggressive merchant class, often recruited from the younger sons of the landowners, intent on trading or exploiting new territories overseas. The second group were the embryonic industrialists, often non-conformists who were banned from the professions and from further education in established universities, who found their satisfaction in inventive industry, developing national resources of power, improving transport and manufacturing.

backed by humanistic management. These two contrasting active groups exist to this day.

Our profession developed to serve those industrialists. The design techniques of the late 18th, early 19th century engineers were basically scientific;

they built an experimental length of brick-reinforcing wall or a cast-iron beam or an engine boiler and loaded it, they developed text books of material properties and tried to predict behaviour by calculation, they aimed at minimum

material structures because they saw them as having only to satisfy strength criteria... hence the beautiful open trusses. Certainly in the early days of the 19th century engineers saw their methods of design and construction as developing from an

understanding of how man worked. Yet architects, their lack of historical precedent for handling these spaces, were largely not interested in the new materials. They got their work through to be seen as artists and theorists.

lay in the past; their chance of fame lay in reviving historical styles.

The competition for the design of the building for the Great Exhibition of 1851 illustrates this division. Most entries were based on historical style

and used stone or brick. They cost too much, were functionally inadequate and would have taken too long to build. It was a prefabricated cast-iron structure, clad in glass, which was the only entry able to satisfy the criteria. It expressed the

entire new principle of engineering design, where prefabrication and organisation of plant and labour together with the significance of iron and glass as building materials, were demonstrated to the world.

Yet strangely enough, Brit-



Professions

ain, having led the world in the development of concrete, iron and glass, and in the organisation of large-scale construction, then entered a period of resistance to innovation.

Somehow the technological spirit declined. Somehow a class system based on the land and on trade still persisted. The sense of unity in the industrial non-conformist family enterprises was destroyed with the passage of the Disestablishment Act from overseas came into use. Higher strength steels and welding were introduced, concrete and pre-cast concrete developed, resin-bonded plywood and so on were used. Immense economies in labour and materials were achieved. It is interesting how much of that building remains today. The pressure of necessity broke down barriers.

Between 1850 and 1940 the second industrial revolution occurred, this time in steel and concrete, gas and electricity, telephone and radio, oil and chemicals and so on — all of which radically improved living conditions in the west. Innovation shifted from the creative individual to innovative organisations, though not in the construction industry where

disillusionment has led to a more legalistic view of designers' responsibilities. The architectural profession has reacted by welcoming fashion changes the pressures for which constantly exist from the young trying to outdo the old in order to divorce themselves from the failure of the past and by re-introducing the design of many technical elements by subcontractors or suppliers.

But the architects do not feel

secure — a profession that is trying to sell "value" without quantifying it is bound to be vulnerable — though it might be the right way to sell it. Interior designers and quantity surveyors erode the architects' market and it is perhaps not surprising that some architects imply to clients that they not only have their own skills but the engineer's as well — surprisingly enough by engineers who see themselves as dependent on the architects for work or who are extremely distrustful of engineers of other sub-disciplines. Certainly many architects see conflict between architecture and engineering and all see control by their discipline essential.

It is easy of course to exaggerate this. Just as my partners and I chose each other because we saw our differences in knowledge, interest and abilities as being complementary, so are the skills of most engineers and architects complementary.

But today construction is about big money and to handle that successfully calls for toughness and rigour. Autocracy or selfishness do not provide this. A system of collective decision making is essential. But such a partnership does mean shared authority and shared recognition.

What does this story illustrate? It is perhaps not surprising that the architect, who usually gets the job and whose pencil co-ordinates and "markets" the design, assumes he is the designer — the public does too.

It is perhaps also not surprising that engineers, who go through extremely rigorous examinations to qualify and who know that their contributions are an essential part of the whole even though they are usually unrecognised, do not feel adequately rewarded.

What *Private Eye* calls "all the built-in, middleman industries of the eighties such as pop, public relations, video and a lot of non-jobs in the City which involve shuffling money about" are more financially rewarding and have higher status than engineering. Recently just one of the large City investment houses has received 6,000 unsolicited applications for appointments. The cost to primary producers, in that every 11 days the foreign exchanges turnover the total value of a full year's trade in goods, must be high. A cost which the rest of our society must pay. Presumably the Big Bang is about our getting even more opportunities to practise it? So far the price we seem to pay is in jobs, but it is hard to believe that the current success of commerce over industry will lead to a successful and prosperous society.

More than that is the all-pervasive values of this successful merchant class, which drive the wedge between art and technology — anything old is respectable, anything new is out; anything rural is respectable, anything industrial is out. Which of course is why there are 26 architectural knights — and only four structural engineers appear knightly.

It is we engineers who must change this situation — otherwise no-one of any quality will go into engineering and there will again be no technical innovation in British building.

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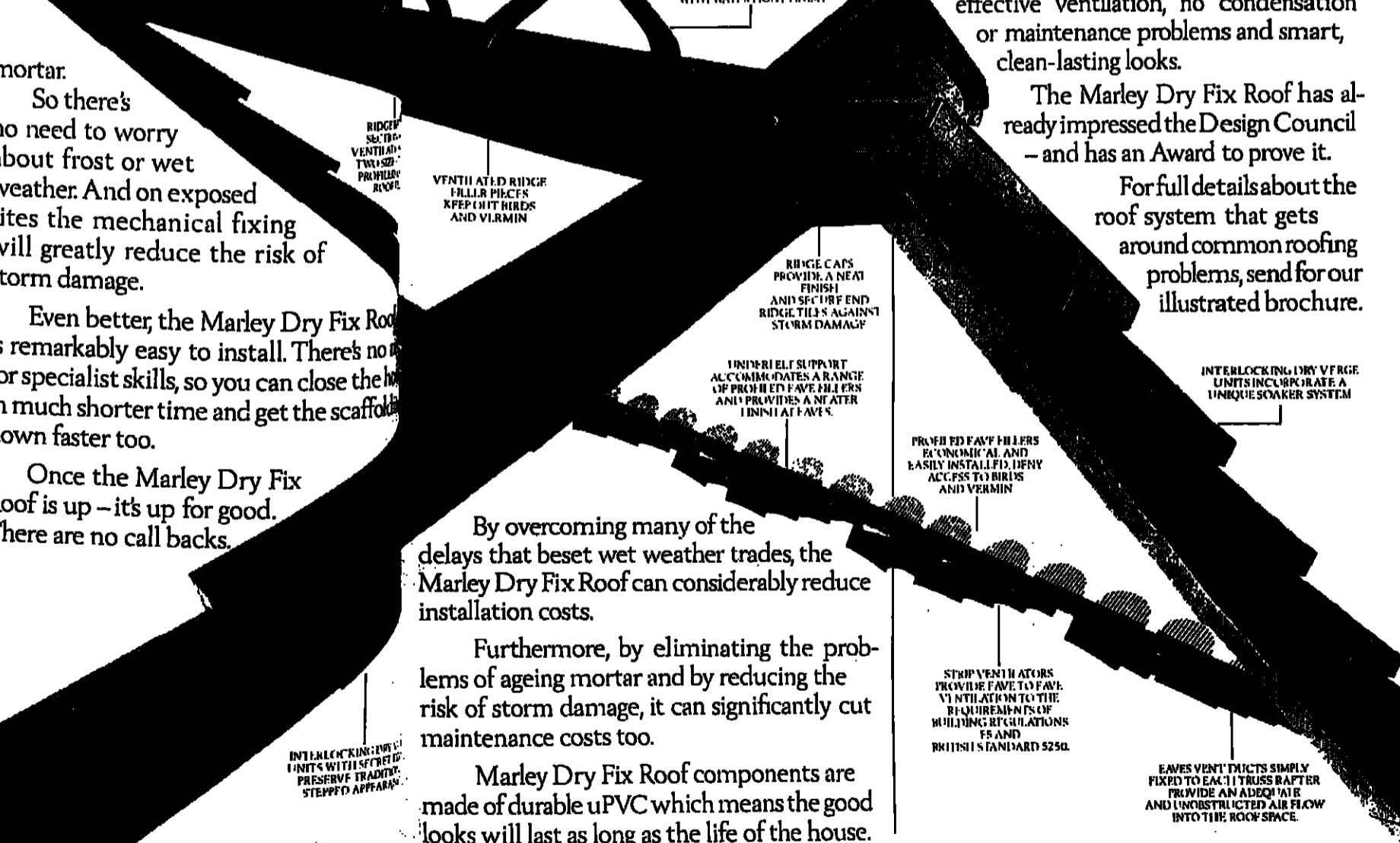
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Buildings

CITY INSERT

FROM James Stirling's Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart to Hans Hollein's municipal museum in Mönchengladbach, Germany has seen the completion of many significant buildings in recent years.

To the growing list of impressive new museums and art galleries can now be added the newly opened Schirn am Römerberg in Frankfurt.

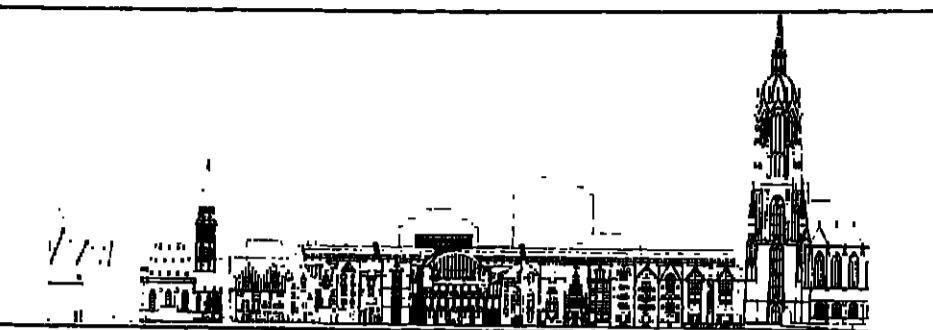
"Schirn" was once a term for butchers' shops in the centre of a medieval city, but today it is the name of a public building devoted to a wide range of cultural activities. The story of the transition is long, but the final chapter has just been written; a new building has been erected on an important city site, while helping to preserve the character and historical importance of an unusual location.

In 1944, the Gothic old town of Frankfurt was reduced to rubble during two air raids, and while much of the post-war effort was devoted to rebuilding other parts of the city (often, alas, to a poor standard of design), the site stretching from the cathedral to the Römer Town Hall remained desolate for 37 years.

Traces of early settlements on the site go back to the Bronze Age, and extensive archaeological Roman remains have been preserved to become a feature in the final redevelopment plans. Ten Holy Roman Emperors were crowned in the cathedral between 1562 and 1792; mercifully, however, the building survived the conflict to stand alone in the area laid waste by bombs.

The restoration of the Römer hill site has been subject to many influences including the introduction of new main thoroughfares in the area, along lines laid down for the reconstruction of the old city included in the

The new Schirn Museum in Frankfurt represents the successful insertion of a dramatic building form in a sensitive historic city centre. Brian Walters reports. (Photos: Hans Georg Göllner).



The Saalgasse elevation showing the different town house designs which run the length of one wall of the new building, general development plan of 1948.

The Römer Town Hall, an underground railway station and a car park on or near these sites were all to influence the structures which finally occupied the site between the old cobbled town square and the cathedral, but in order to consider the many suggestions for development, a competition was held in 1950-51. Residential development along the bank of the nearby River Main and around the cathedral dates from this period. Also about this time, a more detailed competition led to the reconstruction of the town hall.

Many more competitions were to follow before this important site was filled; the last, in 1980, stipulating that the design of the eastern frontage of the Römer should be an historically authentic reconstruction of a series of gabled buildings. This decision was to be a matter of considerable controversy, but it was reasoned that by the recreation of its former appearance, rather than the construction of something entirely new, the site would serve to demonstrate to citizens just how much beauty had been destroyed during the war. (Thus serving both as a memorial for the older generation and an object lesson to the young).

Since these buildings were completed in 1983, passions have cooled and there is no doubt that the "old" buildings provide a pleasant foil to the unashamedly modern concrete structure of the town hall.

Filling the yawning gap between the cathedral and the Römer, the Frankfurt firm of Thürlwitzer and Weber

was held to redevelop: an annexe for the municipal offices. Subsequently this project was altered and expanded considerably from its original form, but in any case, it was to be

of no avail, for the project was shelved in 1978.

The construction of the

underground railway beneath the Römer site was to influence the above-ground structures.

When the underground developments had been completed in 1972, the area between the cathedral and the Römer hill was once again left alone. The formation of the Cathedral-Römer Hill Project Group in 1979 led to yet another reappraisal of the site and its future. Indeed, a further competition was held but before doing so, it was evident that the jury was divided on an important issue — the style of buildings which were to occupy the east side of the Römer hill. The competition rules were phrased in such a way that all entries were obliged to include the historical reconstruction as part of their overall plan, although if a

modern variation appeared to have sufficient merit, it would be considered by the jury.

Of the 103 entries, only 24

took this opportunity. The decision of the jury to award the first prize to Berlin architects Bangert, Jansen, Scholz, Schulze was unanimous and their draft became the basis for future planning.

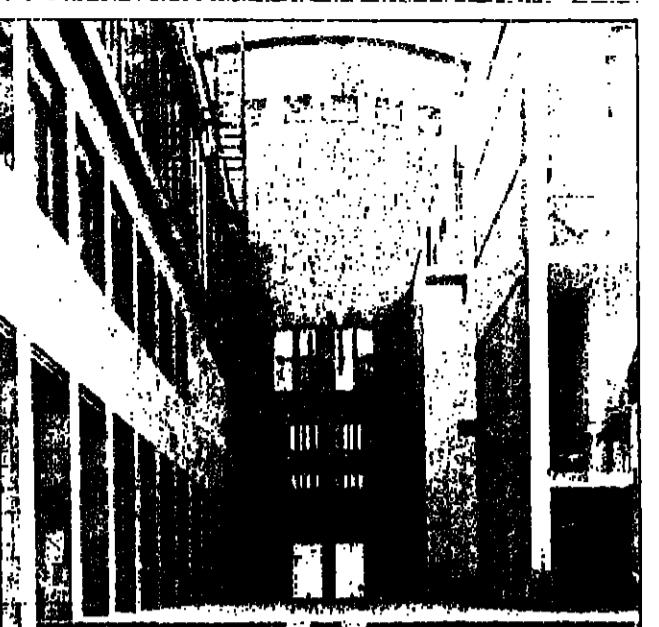
While, on the suggestion of

Heinrich Klotz, Architecture Museum director, the city council ratified the jury's decision in 1980, it also decided to commission 10 other architects to plan residential buildings to run along a narrow lane beside the main building. Mean-

while, construction of the six historical houses began almost immediately (this had been agreed from the outset) and they were completed in 1983.

A bold aspect of the prize-

winning design was the decision to link the cathedral with the Römer by means of a long building or "stoa", a continuous



A view of the rotunda looking west.

arcade visually connecting the St Nicholas church at the south of the Römer with the cathedral to the east.

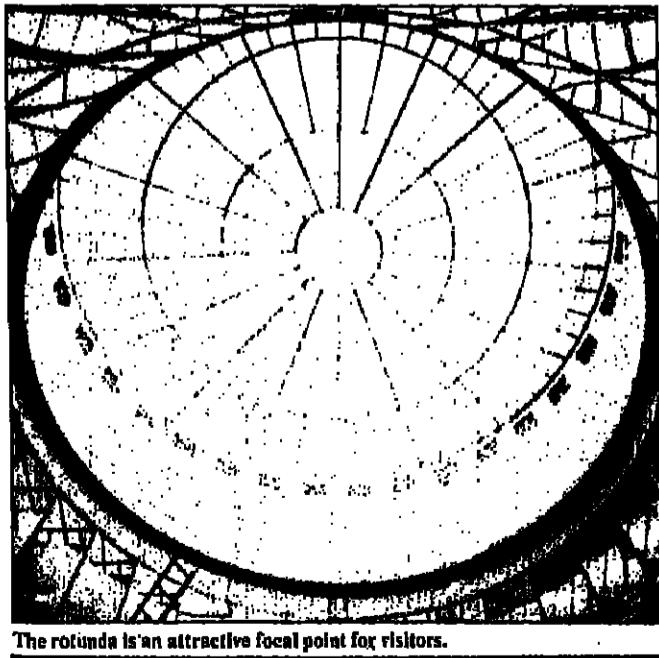
At the same time, the new building provides some stability in a chaotic area — one side of the long wall of the building defines an edge between the cathedral and the rathaus, while the other is now a backdrop for the series of town houses designed by different architects.

A large rotunda provides an axis to the stoa on one side and the pedestrian area leading to the town hall on the other; at the same time this feature acts as a fulcrum or hub.

The new building serves several purposes; providing a home for the City Art Gallery, a youth orchestra, and a meeting place for the elderly and handicapped. All are accommodated in an imaginative building, which has at last solved the problem as to what should be done in this sensitive area.

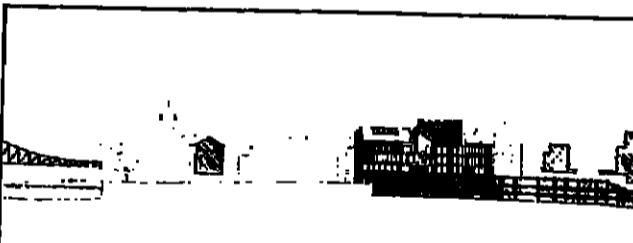


The colonnade forms a southern wall to the square while offering a covered pathway between the Cathedral and St Nicholas church.



The rotunda is an attractive focal point for visitors.

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WORKING for Thamesdown Borough Architects Department is no guarantee of social success. As its self-effacing chief architect, Bob Pepper, confessed to me, "It's not going to get people gathering round you at the party or stop people kicking sand in your face".

When I spoke to him at what he himself described as the department's "sordid and seedy" offices, round the back of Swindon's Town Hall, Pepper showed no trace of sand — sharp or otherwise — on the familiar (if slightly old-fashioned) architect's uniform of beard, casual tweed jacket, red tie and outsize brown plastic specs. He was keen to dispel what he sees as misconceptions widely held among architects about local authority offices.

"The first is that one will be working in an enormous bureaucracy and one will have no control over what one is dealing with. In fact an architect from graduation stage will probably have more opportunity to design the building entirely himself than in any private practice. That is sometimes quite a difficult message to get across."

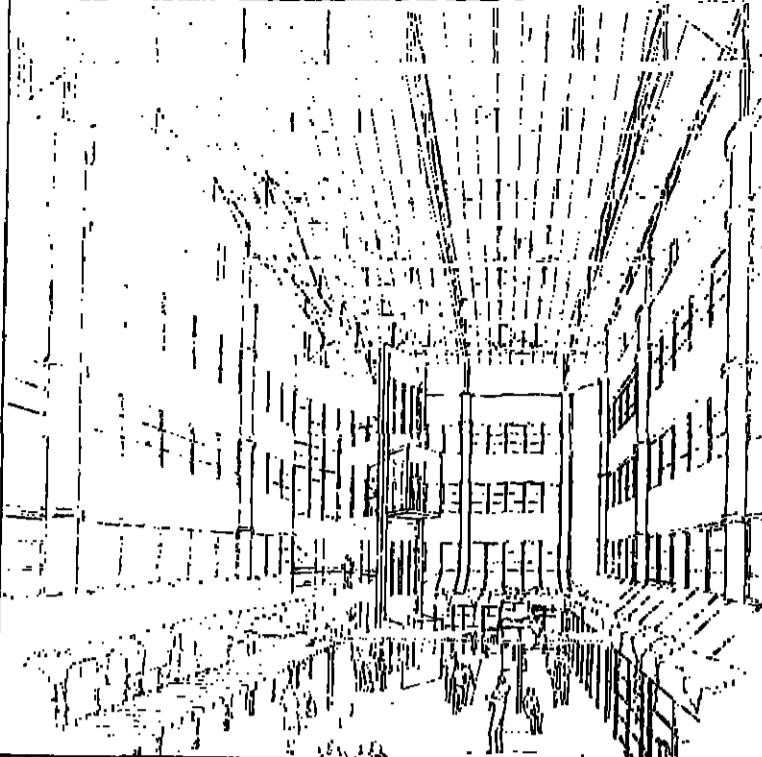
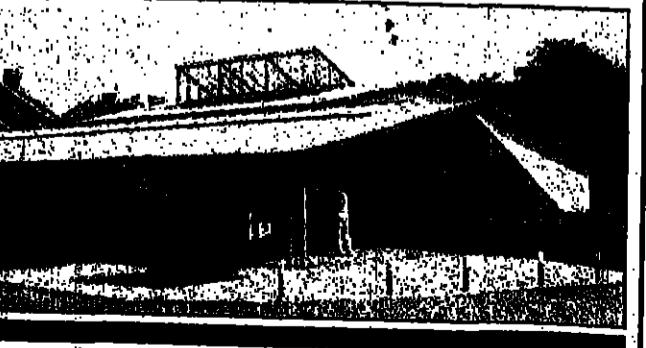
"Then the other one is that there are all these committees that you've got to take everything to and everyone wants to have a say. In fact, most of the time I take schemes to client committees without even showing them elevations."

The town of Swindon does not possess a strongly marked overall character, and does not impose a predefined aesthetic formula upon ambitious young architects. Not much more than 100 years old, and with a tradition for heavy industry, it owes its existence to the Great Western Railway. Its council — since reorganisation, the Borough of Thamesdown — has been dominated by the Labour Party since the war. It has expanded greatly in the last 40 years and was for some years an unofficial GLC overspill town — London accents are apparently a familiar sound out here in the midst of Wiltshire.

Much of the credit for the relatively prosperous position Thamesdown enjoys today is due to David Murray-John, town clerk after the war. Foreseeing the decline of the railway industries, he bought up large tracts of land that have since increased greatly in value. As a result Thamesdown has enjoyed a degree of financial autonomy shared by few if any other municipalities.

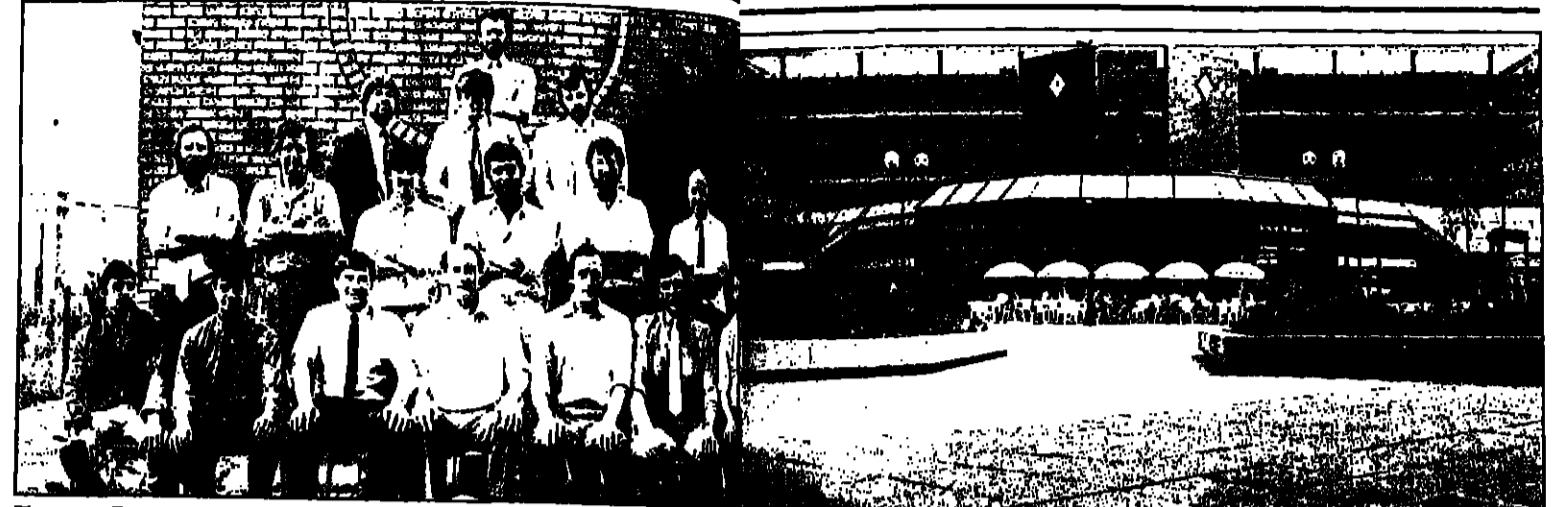
Douglas Stephen & Partners' famed Brunel Centre was entirely funded by the local

Above: George Gay Gardens. A pilot scheme for the conversion of four-storey Easifor system-built maisonettes into an elderly persons' group dwelling, incorporating new-build communal facilities. The use of colour is a strong ingredient in the design. Jack Konynenburg. Below: The Westward community centre which received a commendation in the BSC colourcoat awards 1985. D Pearce.



THE SWINDON EFFECT

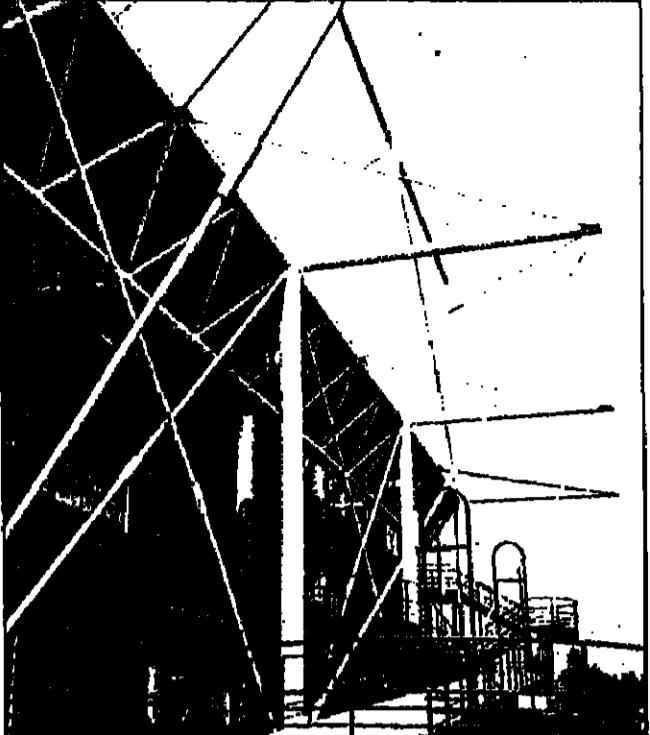
Tim Ostler visited Thamesdown's department and discovered a new local flavour.



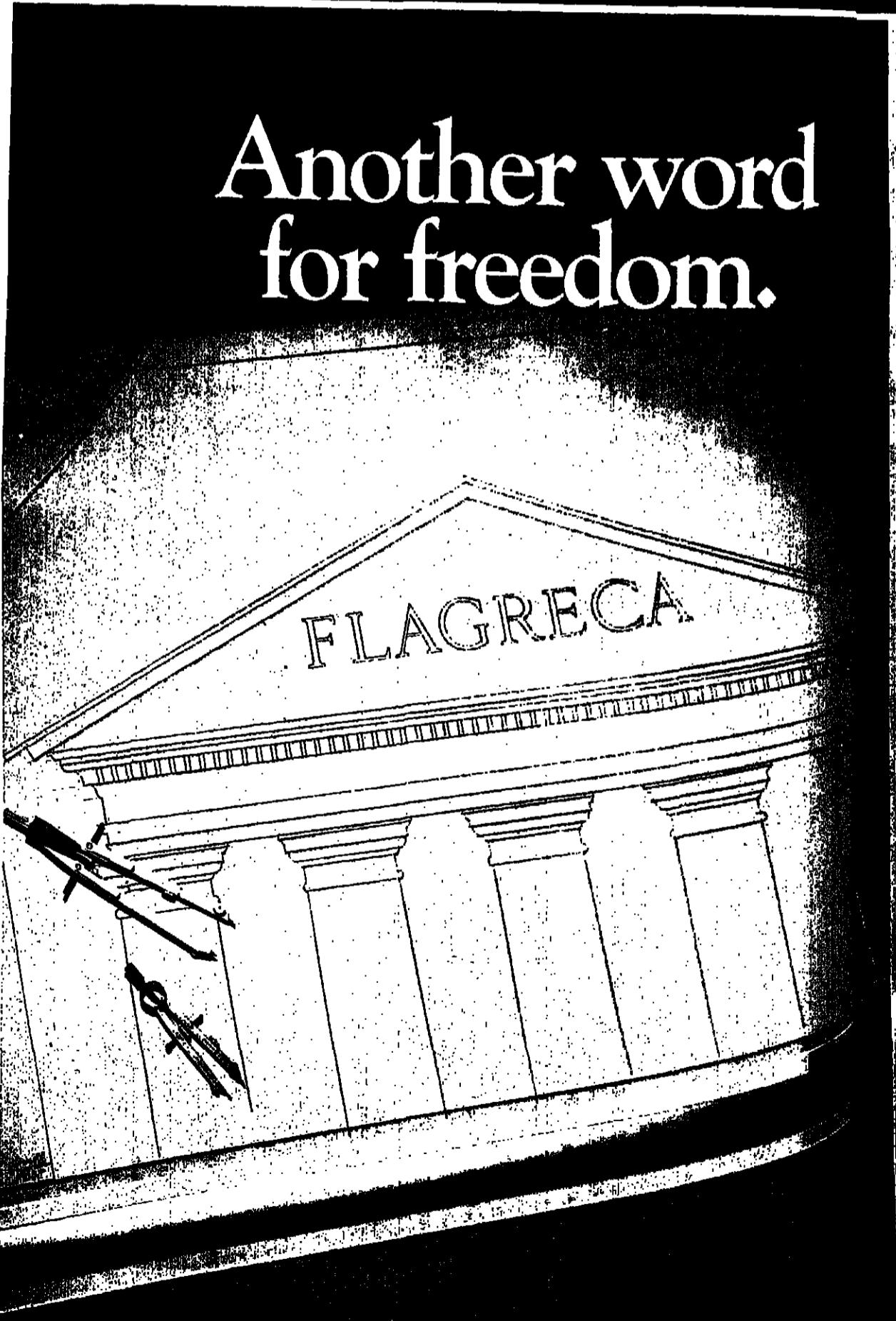
The team. Front row, technicians (left to right): Kevin McDermott, Jerry Drew, Philbrow and centre: bus station and multi-storey car park. The bus station includes a public restaurant, shops and offices with a glazed bridge link to the steel-frame multi-storey, the floor of which acts as an enclosed "shopping mall" for the "customers" of the range of district council services. Bob Pepper, Dave Pearce, Mark Allen.

Richardson, Colin Wilkinson, Andy Read, Dale Roberts, Buck row, group leaders: Macaray car park, Nigel Honer and Ray Jones. Right: The Link Centre. A leisure centre which combines a wide range of sports and arts facilities under one roof — these include an ice-rink, sports hall, swimming pool, squash courts, health suite, public library, studio theatre and community facilities. The structural steelwork is painted

grey, the walls are silver profiled metal cladding and the fire escape stairs are bright green. Toner, Pepper, Emery, Pearce, Bailey (1) Macrae, Oldrove.



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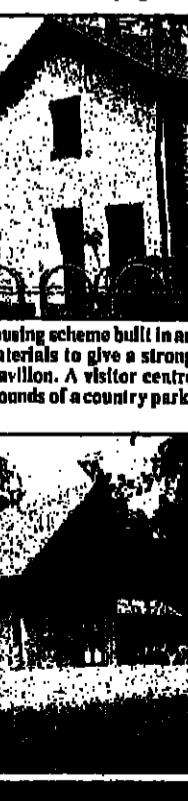
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housing in these conditions is something of a mug's game. Thamesdown's answer is to concentrate instead on "specialist" housing such as for older people — a category not subject to "right to buy" legislation. Older homes, whose construction cost has by now been written off, can then be released for occupation.

Those who moved to Swindon just after the war are now reaching retirement age, and much of the sheltered housing now being built is in the estates developed at that time. Occupants do not have to move far and, as younger families move into the houses vacated, the age make-up of the estates becomes more varied.

One such project, George Gay Gardens, was converted from two hard-to-let post-war blocks of maisonettes. Pepper told me that the brief from the housing manager was very clear: "He said: 'Nobody wants to live in these. I want them converted into a sheltered complex — and when it's finished, I want it to be very clear that it's been turned into a new building; that it's got a completely new character.'"

Job architect Jack Konynenburg satisfied this requirement with a vengeance. Displaying the sort of tricky brickwork detailing with which he might have been familiar in his native Holland, he transformed the two tiered blocks into a multi-tier riot of green window frames, red brick parapets, buff pebble dash, brown render and brick-



Above: Area 59 — the Holbeins. A courtyard family housing scheme built in an urban manner with variety in masonry, colour and materials to give a strong sense of place. Jack Konynenburg. Below: Lydiard pavilion. A visitor centre with exhibition area, changing rooms and cafe in the grounds of a country park. Ray Jones, Mark Allen.



Above: one of three community centres built by the department. This is called Gorse Hill and was designed by Ray Jones.



Right: Frobisher Drive group dwelling. Sheltered accommodation of 48 flats and communal facilities for the elderly around a densely planned courtyard. D Pearce.

The Swindon effect

from page 31

users is rather more difficult. According to Pepper, Thamesdown does not at present have the kind of sophisticated housing management system that enables architects to identify individual needs before houses are built.

His previous employer, Middlesbrough, operated an advanced allocation scheme, designed to pinpoint families likely to be living in each development. These future tenants could then be consulted on what were considered key factors, such as whether they wanted the car parked on their site at all costs, or whether the space would be better used for some other purpose.

In the absence of this system, Thamesdown have to rely on feedback from new occupants — a method Pepper feels to be unreliable. The three-key system used (by the time prospective tenants get to their third choice they have to take it or leave it) means that user acceptance is only a very crude method of assessing a particular house design. Faced with waiting another seven years for a house, people are not often in the mood to object.

Technical performance is rather easier to monitor. Part of Pepper's department are the building surveyors responsible for maintaining the building stock, so lessons from regularly occurring problems can be quickly fed back through the system.

The department has shrunk considerably in the last few years, with a total design staff down to only 16 people, including seven technicians. Pepper operates a conscious policy of taking on staff straight from college. "It brings in ideas from different sources. And on the whole, they're looking to get a couple of years' experience under their belts after graduation, before going on and then trying something else." From an employer's point of view, it allows flexibility to meet staffing requirements at relatively frequent intervals.

Older staff, generally for a more settled position, spending their youth in wild architectural out-of-containment to the department, while technicians, as is slightly alarmingly put, are "sea-anchor" for the "ice" of the job architects.

Longest serving architect, the acknowledged intellectual guru of the office is Nigel Horner, who in 1974 left an association with Powell & Moya to Thamesdown. It is under Horner's aegis that some of the down's most interesting, best detailed buildings have been produced. One of the Freshbrook shopping centre, whose ridge ends and gables are crisply detailed by Bailey. The Link Leisure Centre, with its veritable catena of struts and ties, is another.

It appears to have been de-

a high standard — though at a larger scale the junction of roof and facade is perhaps problematic.

The Link was built at around the same time as Swindon's most famous modern monument, Foster's Renault Centre, with which it shares superficial similarities — along with structural engineers Anthony Hunt Associates. I was told that the choice of a suspension structure was made for quite different reasons from Renault's. The land deal that financed the project generated a fixed sum of money and, in order to minimise losses due to inflation, the roof had to be constructed while the design for the interior layout was still being completed.

Horner's central bus station and multi-storey car park features a cafe as the centrepiece of a square shortly to be enclosed on two sides by office blocks. The project acknowledges the fact that a large number of office workers will have to look down upon it from above with a decorative pattern on the cafe's flat roof in paving slabs and chippings.

It would be surprising if the upheavals suffered by local authorities in the last few years had not had an effect upon the appearance of their building projects. The combination of ever-lower cost limits and the reacceptance of formalism by local authority architects has begun to generate a new local authority vernacular, varying in style from low-budget high-tech to lowbrow post-modernism. In the latter, the lack of intricacy sometimes gives buildings a "cardboard" quality; while both cases, bright paintwork — often with a distinctly rule-of-thumb approach to colour — tends to be used as a low-cost way of setting buildings apart from their surroundings. Thamesdown is no exception; and as a result, to these eyes at least most of the buildings look better in black and white.

Dave Pearce's Faringdon Road public toilet is a case in point. The post-modern pastels (pink for girls, blue for boys) clash with the more complex colours of brickwork. It's almost a modern folly, built behind a fine existing Victorian red brick wall, but lacking the intricacy and fine detail that lightens the heftiness of much of the best Victorian architecture.

The building has proved popular with those living nearby (few of whom, it must be said, can be regular patrons).

Less quirky, but also by Dave Pearce, is the sheltered housing at Frobisher Drive, with stained timber oriel and superb landscaping by Thamesdown's Parks Department.

Pepper dismissed any suggestion that the chief architect should impose a style of architecture on the office. "We don't have a house style and we would never wish to impose that on anyone. All I seek is that — it sounds trite — a caring human architecture should come out."

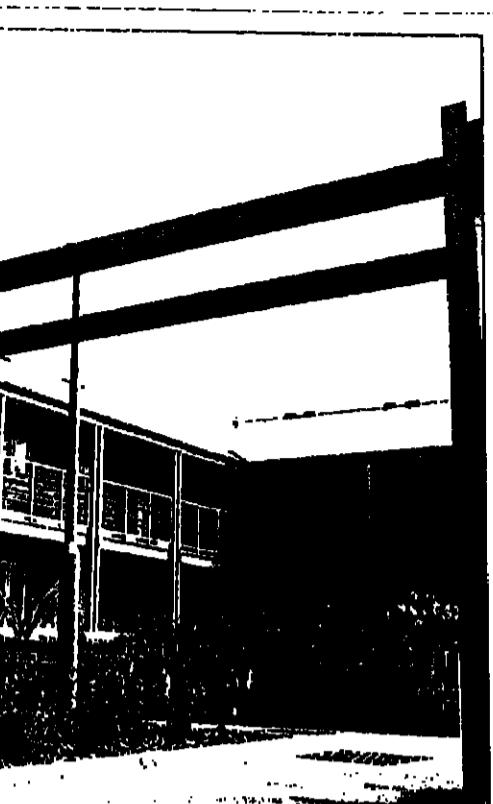
He's right — it's trite — but then it's not a chief architect's job to think up original slogans. Far better to judge him on the buildings his office produces.

The last general purpose

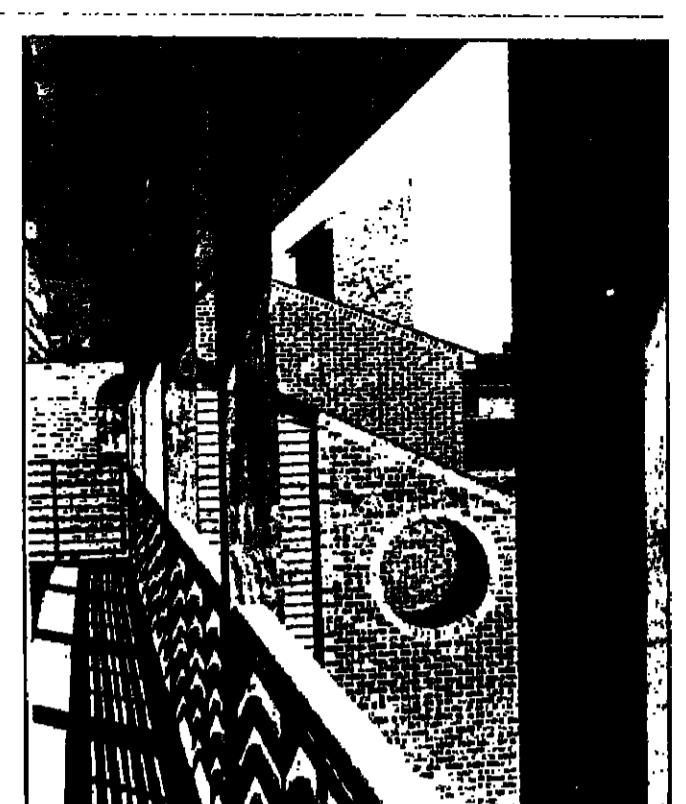
housing development Thamesdown built before the moratorium was Arca 59 (The Holbeins), a development of 144 units around a central square. Job architect Jaap Konynenburg designed it in characteristically exuberant colours around the requirements of DoE Design Bulletin 22, stressing the identity of individual houses and featuring a range of house types.

Despite the lip service paid at the time to sociology and social surveys, most of what was produced during the great age of public housing in the fifties and sixties owed its form less to a considered analysis of needs than to the rhetoric of the modern movement. Ironically, only now that activity is a fraction of what it was before is at least most of the buildings look better in black and white.

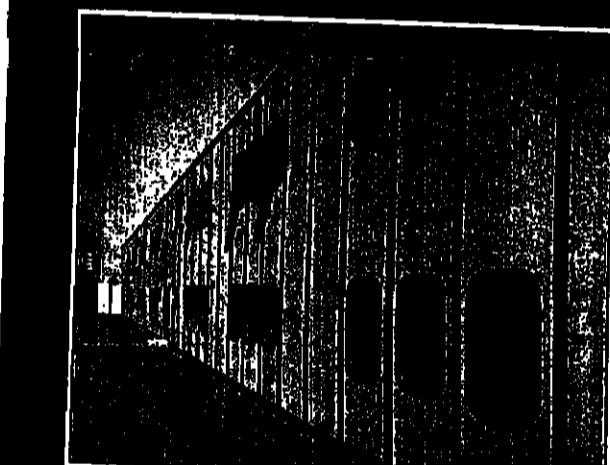
Dave Pearce's Faringdon Road public toilet is a case in



Above and right: The David Stoddart Gardens. Sheltered accommodation of 80 flats with communal facilities for the elderly. Designed around two courtyards with sheltered balcony access to one of them. G Stewart, Bob Pepper.



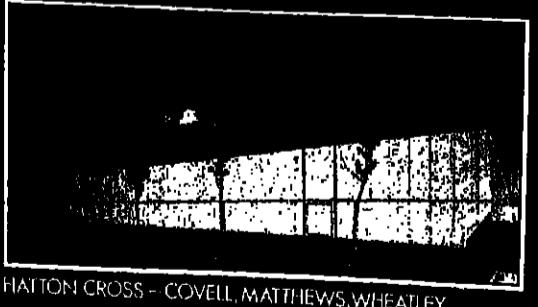
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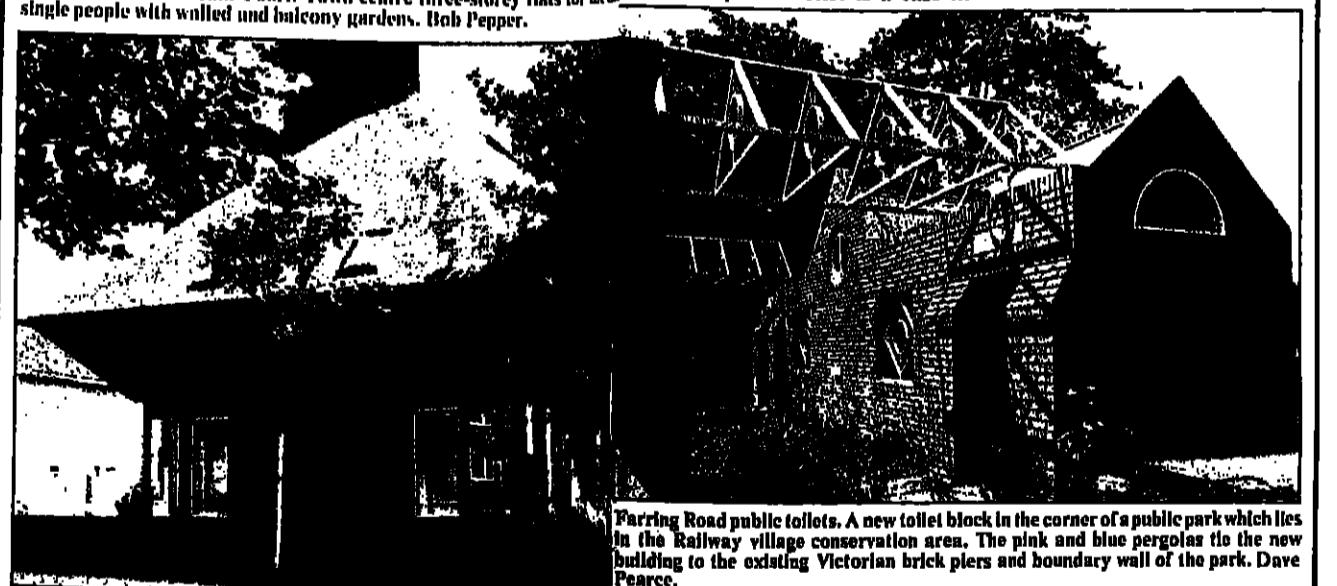


OXFORD ICE RINK — NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW

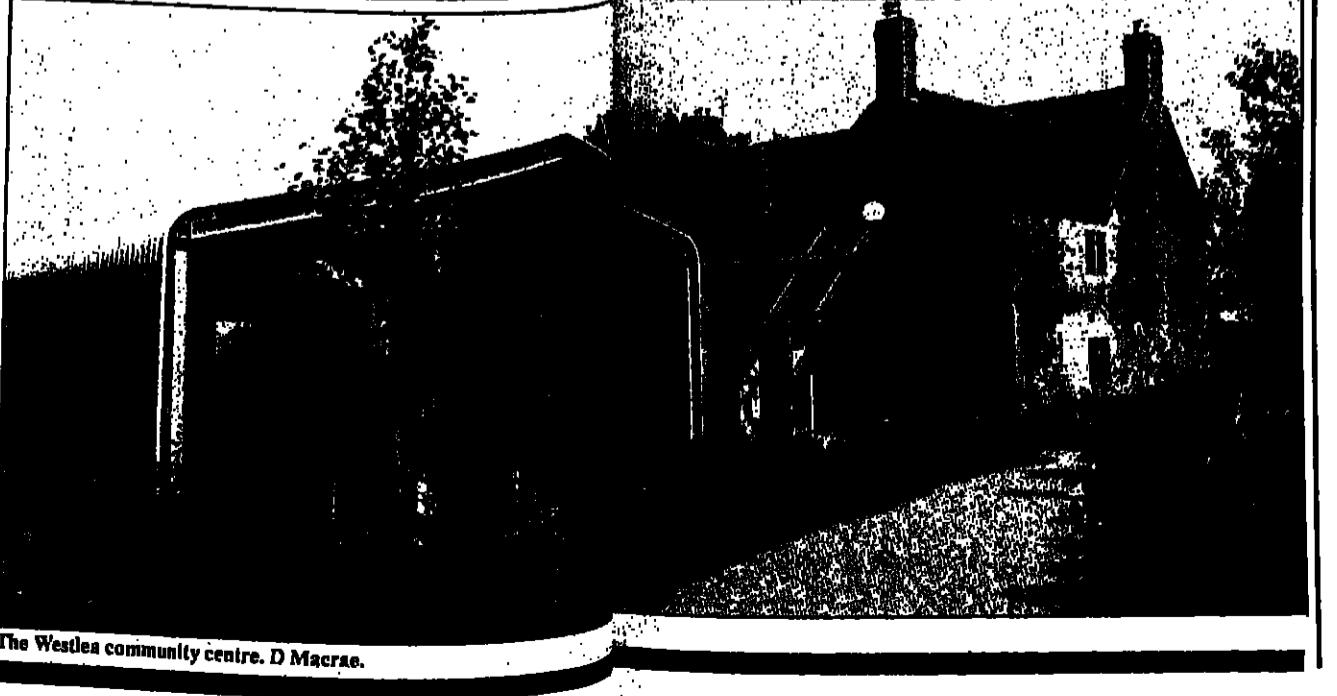
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Above: Freshbrook shops. A number of shop units, part of Freshbrook. The scheme was runner-up in the 1985 BSC Colourout awards. Nigle Bailey. Below: Cockram Court, Town centre three-storey flats for the single people with walled and balcony gardens. D Pearce.



Faringdon Road public toilet. A new toilet block in the corner of a public park which lies in the Railway village conservation area. The pink and blue pergolas tie the new building to the existing Victorian brick piers and boundary wall of the park. Dave Pearce.



The Westlea community centre. D Macrae.

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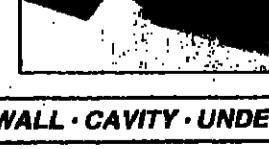
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Archeology

Of all the ancient landscapes in the western Mediterranean, few can remain in such remarkable preservation as that of Minorca, best known as a holiday island and neighbour of the more popular Majorca. In fact there are more than 2,000 ancient stone structures on the island, most in undisturbed ruin.

Some of these are stone towers, the "talayots", and these are very like stone towers found throughout the western Mediterranean. However, the stone boats, "navetas", and the stone tables, "taulas", are unique to the island. So little archaeological study has been done there that it is not certain what these structures are, when they were built, nor in what order.

Minorca was probably first settled around 6000 BC, and was probably reached in a chain of crossings from the eastern cape of Spain, close to what is now Jayca, and via Ibiza and Majorca. People lived in the caves which occur in natural profusion all over the island, predominantly of Devonian limestone. Many of these caves

ON STONY GROUND

John Cox examines the remarkable stone structures that cover the Mediterranean island of Menorca.



Taula de Sa Torreta de Tra Nubanca. In the left foreground is the wall of the taula court. The talayot stands behind. It is possible to see a little way underneath the capstone: no sign of a mortise.

were enlarged, leaving pillars of stone to support the roof. Other pillars were left half defined round the walls, either in anticipation of enlargements never carried out, or as an architectural motif. To the modern sensibility these squared and levelled caves feel more airy and comforting than the natural

ones, as if the conformities have banished the press of stone.

Most of the free-standing structures are thought to come from the "Talayot period", dated 1500 to 500 BC. There is some disagreement about these dates. The talayots are sometimes called "cyclopean" towers, meaning built by giants,

and there are similar towers in Majorca, Corsica, Sardinia and North Africa, suggesting a "tower people" spread out across the western Mediterranean in the second millennium BC.

One theory connects the talayot builders with the Myceneans, who built in a similar style, and first reached the western Mediterranean in the 15th century BC, sailing to Sicily, in search of obsidian out-

side Minoan control. Minoan boats, to judge from models and scratched pictures of the period, were primarily oared vessels, and perhaps not capable of such long voyages. The Myceneans eventually overran Crete, and it may be that they were among the first to improve the sail and keel. Something like this is indicated in the story of the winged bull that carried Daedalus from Crete to Sicily, bringing about the fall of Minos.

Another theory connects the talayot builders with the "People of the Sea", a confederation of pirates who marauded down the coast of Asia Minor in the years following the Fall of Troy (c 1290), breaking the Egyptian hold over Palestine, and opening the Mediterranean to the Phoenicians sailing out of Tyre. The People of the Sea included Achaeans, Dalmatians, and a people called the Shardana. The Shardana have been identified with the Sardinians, and in *The White Goddess*, Graves notes "a tradition that the Balearic Islands . . . were first made into a kingdom by the Dalmatians Iphitos and Lindus".

Minorca has about 200 of these towers, mostly occupying the high places in the southern half of the island, and often grouped in twos and threes among a cluster of other constructions surrounded by a curtain wall. The largest of these groupings is at Torre d'En Gaumes, where three talayots stand above a Bronze Age city. The site has been roughly cleared to show several acres of ruin, with indications of streets and crossroads. At So Na Cacana, a few miles to the east, a talayot complex stands half excavated to reveal a perplexing mass of structures that fall across the boundaries of some recognised types: Talayot, Hypostyle Court, Naveta, Taula.

The talayots are explained to some extent as a combination of house, watch-tower, ritual observatory and fortified shelter. In their Minorcan form they are mainly circular in plan and squat in profile, the largest being about 40 feet high and 80

feet across. They are constructed on a massive scale, some stones approaching the size of a house, roughly joined, and with a and beautiful patterns of fit.

None has been restored; most are crowned with a capstone of rocks and prickly because which makes it difficult to

roofed in wood, which by now has been long disintegrated. Others seem to have been chambered at the foot, being like hypostyle courts with a talayot constructed over them.

Hypostyle courts are comparatively small constructions, typically about 10 x 20 feet square inside, with one or more central pillars supporting a stone slab roof, or may have even been

navetas all face horizons of about 3 degrees in elevation, the sun (declination 13 degrees south) would have shone to the back of the chamber at sunset around February 14 and October 28.

The talayots are the most obscure. They consist of two pieces of stone: a rectangular slab upright between 10ft and 14ft high, with a second, smaller, and rather thicker slab balanced along the top. About thirty talayot sites have been identified, but only seven talayots still have their capstones in place. They are found close to the foot of a talayot, and set within a "D"-

continued page 38

Archeology



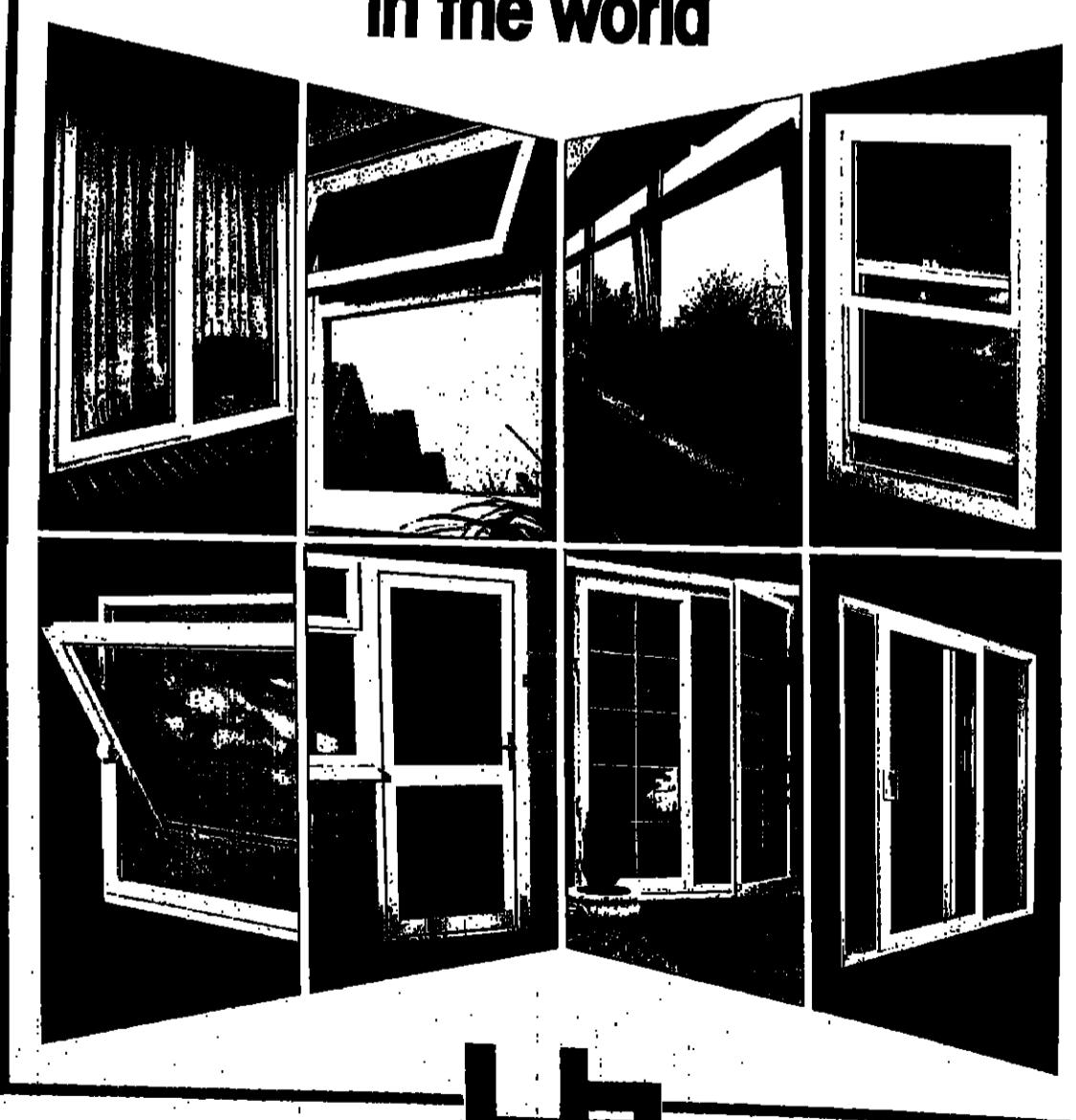
Taula de Trepucó. View from the south-west. The lintel gives into a corridor which in turn gives onto the court.



Taula de Torre Trepucó, with an unusually broad capstone.

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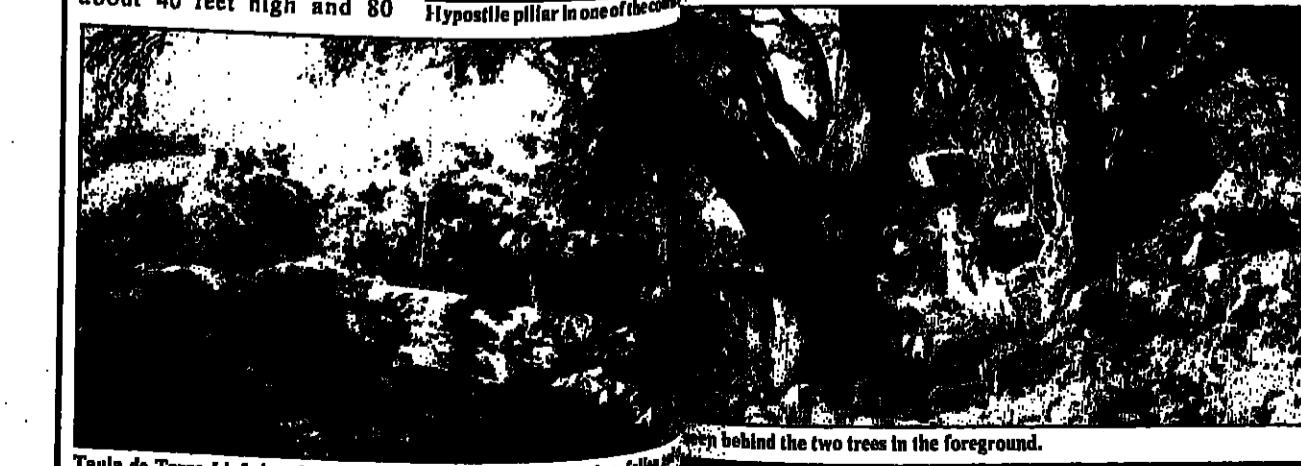
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An ambiguous structure at Sa! The walled structure in the foreground has some of the characteristics of an enclosure, but the upright seems too small to be a proper talayot.



Hypostyle pillar in one of the courts.



Taula de Torre Llafuda, view from the east. The main taula has fallen over behind the two trees in the foreground.

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On stony ground

from page 35
shaped court made from a number, typically 13, of pillars rising to about two-thirds of the height of the taula itself, and set out at a distance of 6ft to 12ft.

The oldest theory about the taulas is that they are tables made by giants. This is still a satisfying answer, since if you imagine a few tree trunks across the surrounding uprights, and picture a few giants sitting round, then all the proportions and distances work out very well. According to Armstrong (1752) the taulas were altars. An Egyptian influence can be identified, since the "T"-shape of the altar with the "O"-shape of the sun over it gives an ankh cross, representing the tree of life, and the totem object of the sun god Atum-Re.

For no very good reason, Ramis (1818) suggested that the taulas were used for human sacrifice. They might equally well have been used for exposure of the dead, in the manner of the Zoroastrians, and perhaps as part of a bird cult. Kites are still

plentiful, and make a fine sight. Curielius (1892) proposed that the taulas were purely functional, being the central pillar of a hypostyle court roofed in wood. This idea is attractive because the taulas do look very much like hypostyle pillars, but the argument has its difficulties. A functional pillar would be expected to be square in section, whereas the taulas are extremely wide and narrow. The taulas are much taller than the surrounding pillars, and this makes an awkward set of angles for roof beams to rest on.

Alexander Thom (1967 and 1971) has shown how megalithic sites could have been used for astronomical observation. In particular, he has shown how megaliths could have been used to mark backsights, places from which particular risings and settings could have been observed at points on the horizon marked by some conspicuous feature of landscape.

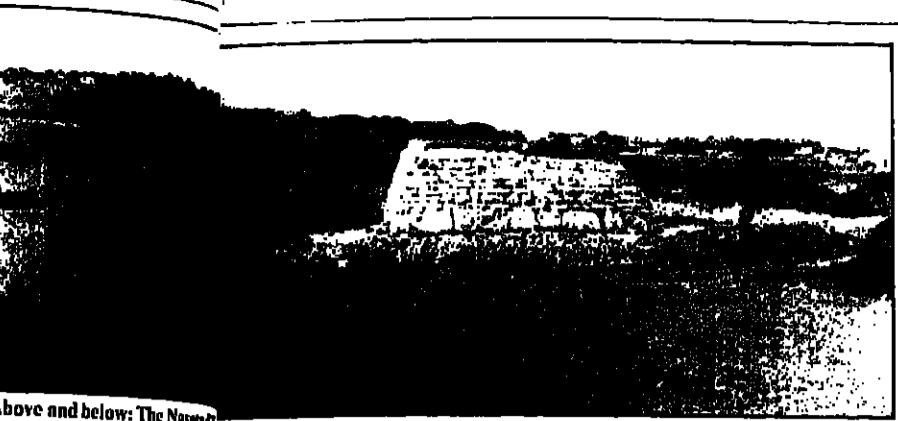
Several of the taulas have the potential to have been used as astronomical backsights. From

the Taula de Trepuco the equinoctial sun would seem to rise directly from a notch at the summit of the Maliton headland. From the Taula de Sa Torre de Tramuntana, the "Table at the tower of the north wind", the midsummer sun rises at a point on the horizon where the land meets the sea, and two further junctures mark the extreme positions of the moon. Looking west from the same spot, in 1000 BC, the Pleiades cluster in Taurus would have appeared to set at the summit of Monte Toro, the highest place on the island.

At the summit of Monte Toro is a church built round a shrine. The legend is that this is where the rock was split open by the horns of a bull, revealing a tiny chamber with a statue inside; Our Lady of the Bull, patron saint of the island. From the story of Jason (1200 BC?) it is clear that the bull is connected to ploughing, since Jason wins the golden fleece (the wheat) by ploughing the Field of Ares with a plough drawn by bulls. Perhaps the plough has a bronze share, since the bulls have brazen feet and breathe fire. The poet, Hesiod, records that autumn ploughing started on



Below: Taula de Trepuco. In the background is the Torre Trencada.



Above and below: The Naveta de Sa Torre de Tramuntana. Note the truly megalithic scale of the bottom line of stones.



Entrance to the west naveta of Rafal Rubi. The dimensions of the naveta are practically identical to those of d'Es Tudons, but a lot of the upper portion is missing.

the first morning when it stayed dark enough to see the Pleiades set. At much the same latitude in Minorca, in 1000 BC, this would have occurred around November 5, about three days earlier than it would have been for the Greeks. If the bull striking the rock represents the cosmical setting of the Pleiades, then the rock splitting represents ploughing, and the revealed Virgin is the constellation Virgo, holding Spica, an ear of corn.

Perhaps Minorca was colonised by navigators around 1500 BC. These people introduced the plough, and lived in an egalitarian society based on the independence of the fortified village. They came from the west, since they buried their dead in stone boats which were turned over on the same point of sail that had brought them from the eastern cape of Spain, and would carry them on to Sardinia, where they became the Shardana.

With the development of practical astronomy, the improved sail, and the invention of the keel, long crossings became increasingly commonplace, exposing Minorca to the influence of Egypt and Ionian Crete. The religious principles became more agrarian, and the monumental architecture became absorbed in a new and ambiguous structure, the taula, representing boat, keel, sail, plough, moon and bull.



Rafal Rubi West. Interior looking back to the doorway.



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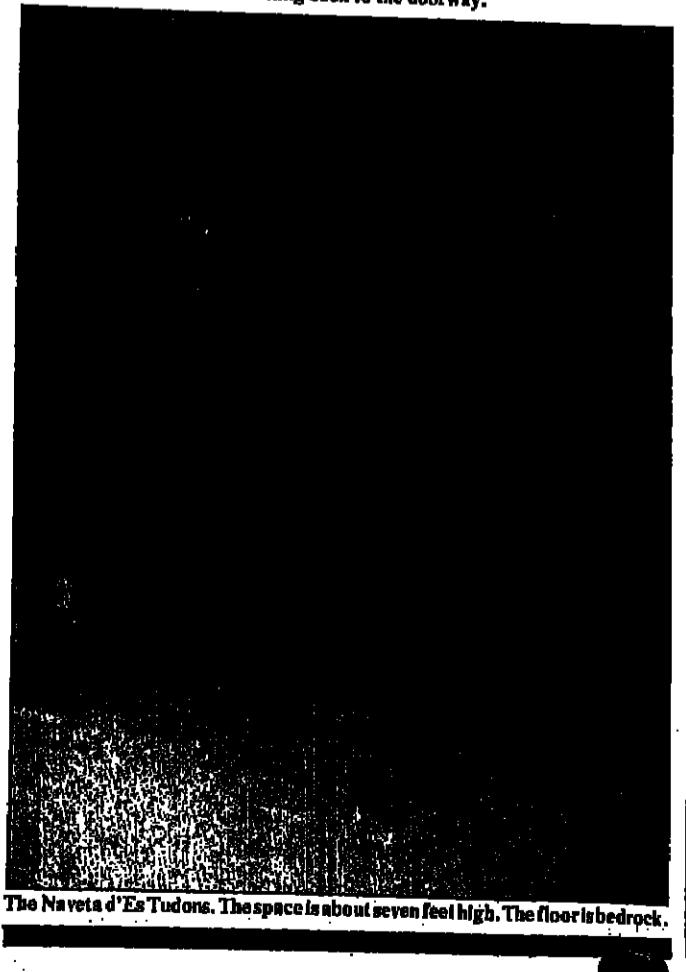


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Pillar inside one of the caves at Cala Morell.



The Naveta d'Es Tudons. The space is about seven feet high. The floor is bedrock.

Blockleys



Wellington Place old people's home.

TEAM EFFORTS

The work of Lothian Regional Council's department of architectural services is the subject of a travelling exhibition. Richard Carr reports.



'A' division police headquarters, St Leonards.

ARCHITECTURAL style spotters will detect an overall style at an exhibition on the work of the Lothian Regional Council.

Recently on view at the RIAS gallery in Edinburgh, but also to be shown elsewhere, the exhibition shows 20 projects by the council's department of archi-

tectural services which has four principals, each of whom leads a design team of nine-10 people. But, as the department's policy is not to give credit to individuals but to stress the importance of the department itself, none of the people involved are identified.

The work is characterized by

very clean lines, a careful differ-

entiation between different materials, minimal ornamentation, a restricted palette of colours and the occasional touch of humour. This is achieved through the treatment of elements like windows and details like light fittings and gates. The result is that the architecture, though emanating from a local authority, doesn't look bureaucratic.

The exhibition marks the first 10 years of work by the department following the dissolution of Edinburgh City Council and the establishment of Edinburgh District Council and Lothian Regional Council. It also coincides with the move from offices in the centre of Edinburgh to a converted, late 19th century school on the northern side of the city, and an endeavour by Tom Hughes, director of architectural services, to show both the councillors and the public what has been achieved so far.

This, admittedly, is not easy to see in an exhibition which contains mainly recent work. But the projects do show the breadth of work undertaken by the department — including schools, day centres, fire stations, police stations (including one being planned close to the Palace of Holyrood House) and even a pumping station. The department employs some 250 people involved in £40 million of new build and £13 million of maintenance work a year, providing services which include planning, architecture (including surveying and engineering), interior design, property management and even outside commissions. These earn approximately £1.5 million a year.

Though an overall style is discernible, Hughes says this comes about almost by accident since it is not imposed by him nor is there any attempt to make the principals design in a particular way (except to impossible low budgets, of course).

And within the style there are different interpretations so that Tollcross Fire Station, for example, can be unashamedly post-modern in its fortress-like entrance with triangular win-

dows to one side (though it could also be compared to expressionist buildings in Amsterdam, for instance), while Tynecastle Sports Hall plays a marvellous visual game, the shape of a large, Crystal Palace-like window on one facade being repeated in miniature by the detailing of the entrance door below. Unexpected shapes are also found in the treatment of a large window in the Craighall Day Centre, whose entrance breaks through a pitched roof like the prow of a ship (recalling Frank Lloyd Wright), and in details like the entrance gates to Balerno High School.

There are also examples of more restrained work from the department, like the old people's home in Wellington Place, Edinburgh, which has a nicely detailed entrance and surprisingly successful corner windows. There are very straightforward designs, like the schools at Beeslack and Castlebrae. The department also has its share of rehab and the exhibition shows the care taken in the restoration of the foyer in the Playhouse Theatre, Edinburgh, and Leith Police Station, an extremely handsome 18th century building. Also successful is an extension to a day centre in a Victorian building in Firhill. Here, the extension itself is not only very sympathetic, but its orientation gives a beautifully composed view of the original building from the dining room of the new one.

The exhibition, which is accompanied by a booklet, is a morale booster for the department. It has, Hughes told me, suffered cutbacks since its inception, losing two principals (there were originally six) and undertaking very little recruitment, with some members of staff taking early retirement. It has also had to redesign continually as central government has put increasingly stringent controls on local authority spending, and has had to accept that most financial considerations are concerned with capital cost only, and pay very little attention to running costs or long-term maintenance.

Despite this, some of the

department's designs are adventurous and many are well built.

The department has had its victories, like the successful battle to provide a big, central concourse in Balerno High School which serves as a social focus which can also be used by local people outside school hours (and thus harks back to Gropius & Fry's design at Impington).

The next step, Hughes says,

is to fill the vacant post of chief architect with someone who

may spend little time at the

drawing board, but will under-

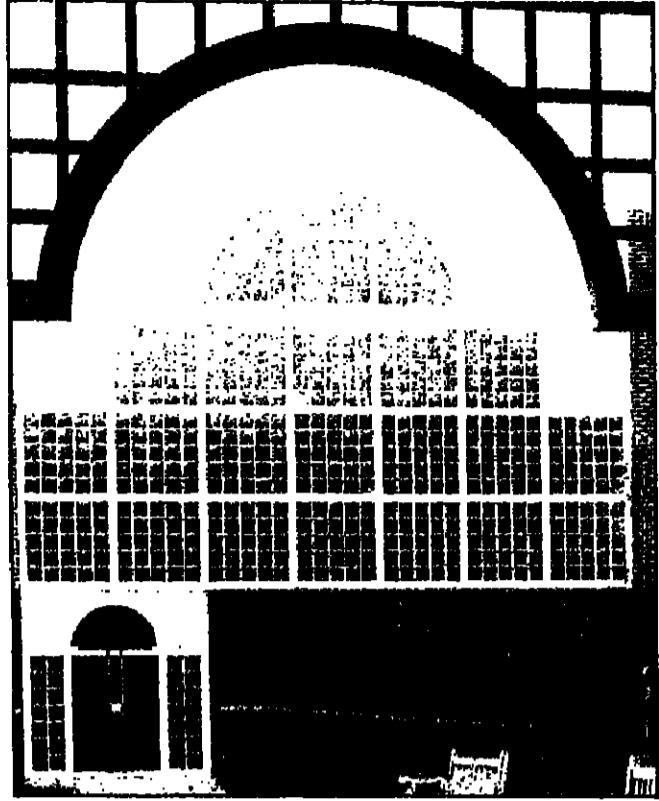
take comprehensive, long-term

planning of the rehabilitation

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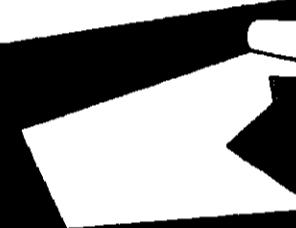
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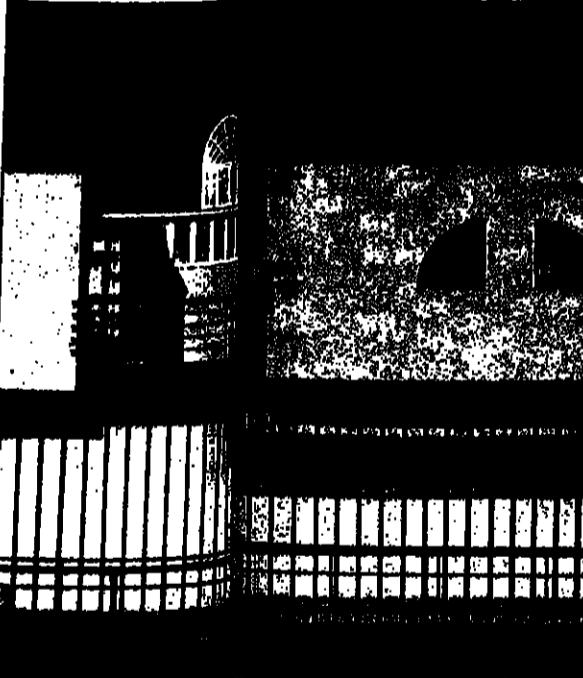
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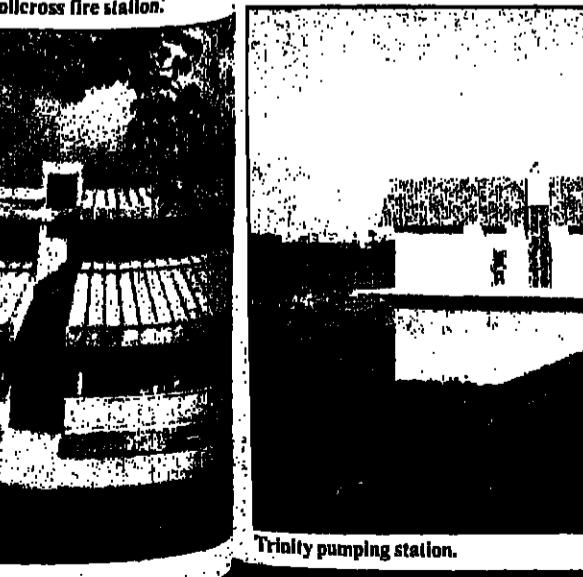
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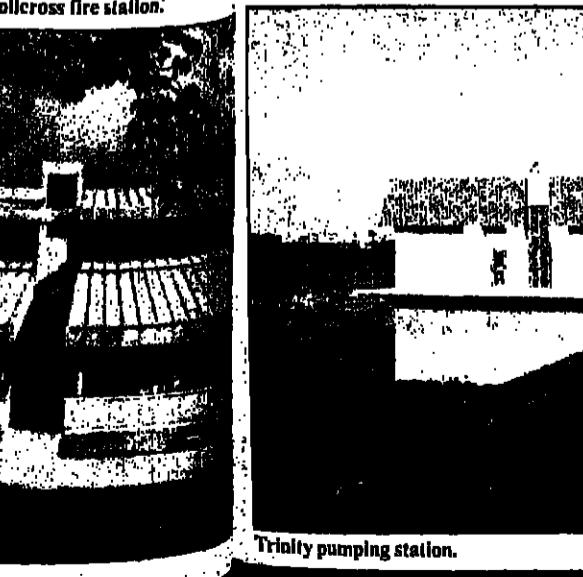
Window at Craighall Day Centre.



Tollcross fire station.

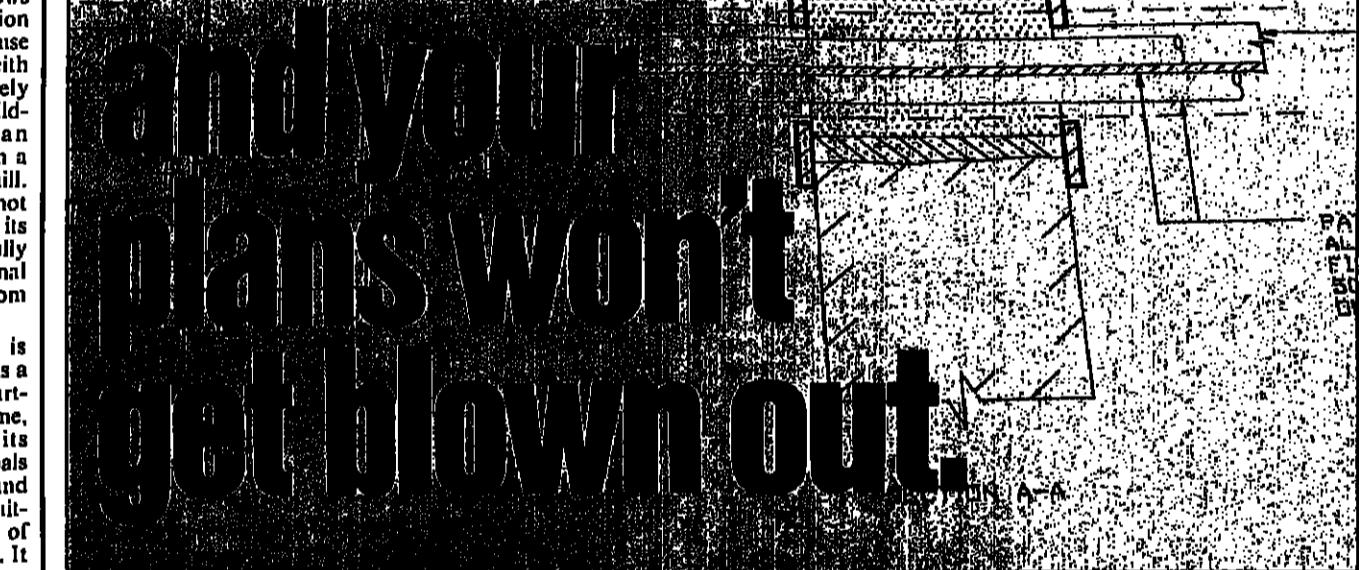


Balerno High School.



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Books



Function, fashion and frills

By Brian Hatton

Flight of Fancy: The banishment and return of ornament, by Brent C Brolin (Academy Editions).

THIS is really two books pretending to be one. A glance through the illustrations might suggest that Brolin's aim was an empirical visual survey of the many ways in which ornament and decoration have been incorporated in architecture, with a view to practical tips for the designer.

Brolin certainly has an eye for this, and if he had carried it through it would have made a worthwhile and stimulating

compendium. But the text reveals an altogether more polemical undertaking, using a battery of historical and scholarly references for the purpose of nothing less than a refutation of the anti-ornamental architectural theories of the past two centuries:

"From the middle of the 19th century, designers made it increasingly difficult to talk about the beauty of a design, or the attractiveness of its decoration in purely aesthetic terms... Instead, through the so-called principles of design, they appealed to our intellect and sense of morality: we were to appreciate their honest expression of structure, function, material, and so on. Succinctly stated, ideology replaced taste as the basis of discussion about the nature of beauty..."

"In sum, designers found it difficult to impose what they felt was 'good taste' on a growing middle class whose 'bad taste' was epitomised by an unrestrained love of ornament. The principle of design appealed because they put designers on a wholly different, intellectual plane. They no longer needed to speak in terms of taste or mere

credulous market" (p. Brolin sounds at the onset: Tom Wolfe without the argument at this point: aches the cynical and cynicist eclecticism of Johnson).

Brolin's book has had

with the aesthetics of design, no point does he attempt to examine the problems of function, purpose, and value in such a way as to directly address any of the points made by Semper and other serious critics of ornament. Instead, there is a great denial on the social, of taste and professional initiation. Yet even his sociology is that of a researcher concerned to establish a pattern of one preference in relation to whose true value is not

indeed a matter of taste... Brolin fails to note that

He makes a promising beginning when he notes the principles of ancient craftsmanship, but fails to follow this kind of analysis through to the times and ruins his argument by confining his history to ideology; or to be exact, ideology of the refer-

Brolin fails to note that

been frowned upon, such as: obscure the method of construction, rather than explain how an object is made; to disguise the nature of the material and the technique used to work it, rather than reinforce the 'inherent' nature of a material and the technique used to work it.

The breadth of Webster's definition has the virtue of common sense, which one often finds in the observations of the amateur. That is to say, it leaves the decision about what constitutes proper ornament to the eye, as that is the proper organ with which to make judgments."

Leaving aside the question of how an "eye" (whatever that is) can make judgments, or how one deems propriety without ideology, this conflation is wrong.

Not for moral reasons, but for reasons which a better understanding of Kant would have revealed, and which Brolin might have gleaned from a better interpreter of Kant, namely Clement Greenberg. It concerns the differentiation and autonomy of aesthetic categories and their exemplifications.

stunning mosaics which make it one of the most beautiful environments I have ever entered, but the intrinsic architectural qualities of the mausoleum building are, I would say, only slightly greater than those of the concrete air-raid shelter that used to grace my parents' council-house back garden.

Insofar as architecture exists as an aesthetic object in its own right, with its own qualities and "domain of competence", as Greenberg calls it, then architecture must be distinguished from ambient, attached, and incidental aesthetic sources and objects such as drapes, theatrical lighting effects, furnishings, paintings, etc.

The specific domain of architecture is the interaction of space and tectonic, structural form. This is not to say that the particular qualities of the best architecture will not spring from and respond to what the Nato group call the "discourse of events, life, and action"; or that the objects and effects of that discourse will not, optimally, consummate and fulfil (i.e. ornament) the architectural framework of its happening. Yet the architecture must, if it is to remain architecture at all, retain its own integrity as an autonomous object of aesthetic experience.

No amount of decoration, no matter how high a quality, will transform indifferent architecture or design into a good example of its kind, no more than diamonds will make an ugly woman beautiful. The Kantian demand is that all things should be judged aesthetically in their own terms and of their own kind.

As for the morality of ornaments and decorations, Brolin's obsession with the styles and effects of designs, and not their substance, subjects and purpose, prevents him seeing that ethical questions are involved at the very root of creative action and aesthetic policy. Clearly, to debate whether ornamental or decorative style for a wine bar is more or less moral than another is absurd. But it is not absurd to debate whether it matters more to us to build wine bars than operating theatres, or casinos rather than nurseries. Nor is it absurd to debate whether we should put, say, 5 per cent of a hospital building budget towards ornamental or decorative schemes or to put the money towards an improved technical provision, for instance, a new kidney machine or whole-body scanner.

The Kantian demand leads, in the area of instrumentality, directly towards the issue of technique. If ornament cannot justify itself as technique it will lose out to those things that can, and only when and where technique ceases to innovate, improve and expand will ornament return on a reasoned basis.

Ornament and technique are the respective expressions of ends and means. When technique fails or lacks, when it reaches its limits, then we must make a virtue of necessity; and at that point, for want of any further method, and out of our excess energy and craving for consumption and meaning, we create ornamental beauty. In this sense, ornament is the transcendence of technique and purposeful action, and becomes the symbolising embodiment of the "purposeless purposiveness" that Kant described as the characteristic quality found in beautiful form through aesthetic experience of it.

It is not structure, material, or technique that is immorally concealed by decoration, it is simply the architecture (if there is any), and not immoral, but simply illogical, for if you have real architecture, why conceal it? Of course, if there is little or no architectural quality present in a building, and if you have on hand a decorator of genius, (Michelangelo, for example), then it makes sense to decorate the building if (and this is a crucial if) propriety demands it.

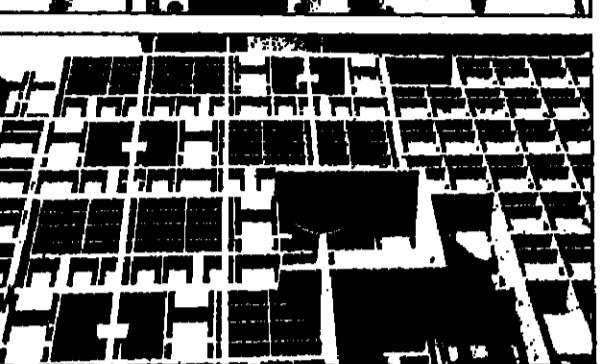
The mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna is lined with a number of things that are

Books

end in itself, but simply a reminder that today we have to go through many more practical demands before we are able to contemplate its specific and unique values clearly enough to commit ourselves to shaping and fashioning it with the conviction which alone justifies it and guarantees its aesthetic success.

It is only when a rational and philosophical policy as to what to build with our resources, and a sound and clear system of priorities in our beliefs is established, that questions about the wisdom, propriety, and above all, meaning, form, and decoration can be settled and conviction accorded to them, can the cultivation of the quality of ornament and design proceed.

Brolin is mistaken: ornament and decoration are not merely flights of fancy, they are the expression of values, and ultimately, of our identity, of who we are and what we are here for, and what, indeed, is here. In other words, the consideration of ornament takes us far beyond Brolin's consumer hedonism to the contemplation of the source and form of our cosmos.



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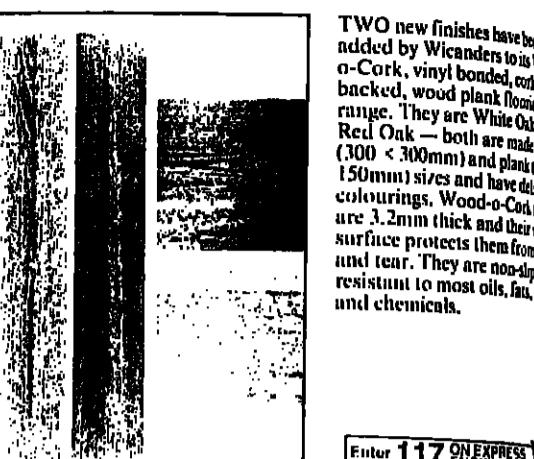
Blinds



INTENDED for the contract furnishing market, the new easy-care festoon blinds from Apollo window Blinds is available throughout the UK via 90 outlets. Available in a choice of fabrics from fine voile to a lightweight satin, the festoon blinds can be washed and drip-dried without removing the cords. They have side frills and a deep double frill at the bottom.

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Pale floors

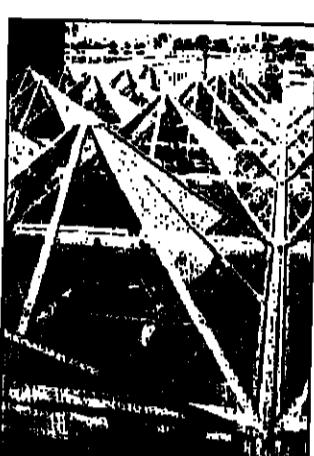


TWO new finishes have been added by Wicanders to its o-Cork, vinyl bonded cork-backed, wood plank range. They are White Oak/Red Oak — both are made (100 x 300mm) and have 150mm sizes and have six colourings. Wood-o-Cork are 3.2mm thick and their surface protects them from wear and tear. They are non-slip, resistant to most oils, fats and chemicals.

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Pyramid dome

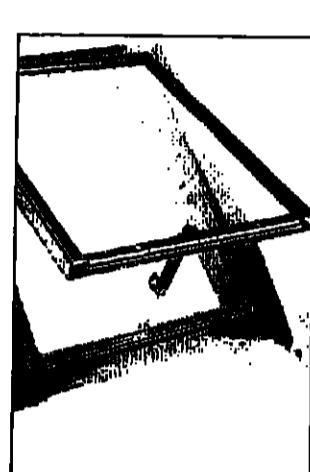
IN order to enable dome sizes up to 3m square to be produced, William Cox has developed a new aluminium-framed version of its Mark 5 Coxidome. This incorporates an aluminium bar section in each corner edge and culminates in a purpose-made casing at the point. Glazing is by all materials used in the normal Mark 5, both single and double skinned, plus the addition of wire laminate upvc and polycarbonate. By using the Coxidome matrix system of aluminium gutters, larger areas of glazing can be achieved.



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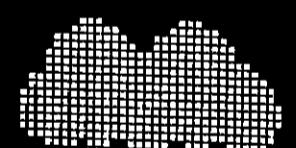


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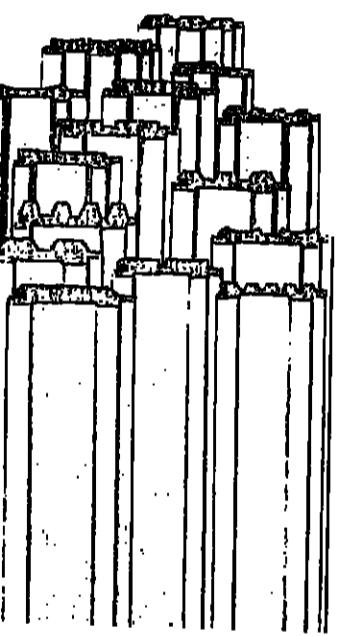
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Dateline

Items for consideration must be received 10 days prior to publication

This week

Saturday
Development control, seminar organised by the Association of Christians in Planning and Architecture. Venue: St Clements family centre, Cross Street, Oxford. Details: Andrew Patrick (0202) 600 047.

Monday
Building, a seminar for specifiers organised by the British Standards Institution. Venue: BSI Conference Centre, Hamlyn House, Green Street, London W1. Details: Gordon Graham, Marketing Department, BSI, Milton Keynes MK14 6EL. (0908) 320033.

Monday — Tuesday
User Interfaces, a conference organised by the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute. Venue: The Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, CH 8803 Ruschlikon/ZH, Switzerland. Cost: £1,150. Details: Dr T Bernold or Ms D Kunz-Wechsler, 01-461 3716.

Monday — Thursday
Responding to the Audit Commission report (saving energy

in local authorities), residential course for senior management in local authorities organised by the Centre for Energy Studies. Venue: Avery Hill College, London SE9. Cost: £250. Details: Centre for Energy Studies, Sout Bank Polytechnic, Borough Road, London SE1 0AA.

Tuesday
The use of stone in building, a course organised by the standing joint committee on natural stone, involving a visit to a masonry works or a site. Venue: Unconformed. Cost: £25 per delegate, students registered with architectural schools £8.50. Details: The secretary, SJCNS, 82 Cavendish Street, London W1M 8AD.

Wednesday until October 31 Fine prints and drawings of architectural interest. Venue: The Building Centre Gallery, 26 Store Street, London EC1E. Details: 01-637 1022.

Wednesday
Environmental Design, Holloway Road, London N7. Details: Amanda Clark, 01-373 4537.

Wednesday
Structural brickwork for architects, one-day course sponsored by the Brick Development Association and organised by the Polytechnic of North London. Venue: Department of Environmental Design, North London Polytechnic, Cost: £30. Details: Len Harris or Lawrence Revill, 01-226 1234 (ext 3270 or 3274).

Tuesday
Style for living, a major design seminar, part of the Style for 87 exhibition. Venue: Earls Court Exhibition

conference organised by GMBATU. Venue: The Crest Hotel, New Bridge Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 10am-3.30pm. Details: Alan Donnelly, (091) 273232.

Thursday
The hand that draws, lecture by Philip O'Reilly in the series of lectures by architects, designers, painters and teachers. Venue: White Box Lecture Theatre, School of Architecture, Horace Jones, No 3 Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 2AR. Details: 01752 264645.

Thursday
Housing — a cause for concern, a seminar organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects. Details: 01-389 8000.

Architectural & Construction BOOKSHOP

1. The Fireplaces Book by Roxana McDonald. A practical guide, encompassing both functional and aesthetic considerations, to fireplace design, maintenance and restoration. Price £10.95.

2. Building Regulations Explained and Illustrated (Seventh edition) by Powell-Smith and Billington. Covers the new 1985 Regulations for building types for England and Wales, with extensive illustrations and references to regulations and Approved Documents. Price £14.50 (paperback).

3. Hotel Planning and Design: a guide for architects, interior designers and hotel executives by Walter A. Rutes and Richard H. Penner. Identifies the key opportunities in this field and analyses the planning and design criteria for over 50 different types. Specialised and up-to-date guidance unavailable elsewhere. Price £49.50.

4. The Classical Orders of Architecture by Robert Chitham. Immediate line drawings and informative captions explaining the origins, development and practical usage of all the classical architectural elements, invaluable to designers and fascinating for their clients. Price £16.43.

5. The Architect's Guide to Fee Negotiations by Ray Mosley. Eighty-second edition of this annual reference source for architects and specifiers in the construction industry. This book sets out all the items that have to be negotiated at each stage. Price £18.65.

6. Construction Project Management using Small Computers by Glen Peters. As well as explaining the principles of project management, this book explains how these can be applied on small computers and which particular systems are most suitable. Price £13.35.

7. Legal and Contractual Procedures for Architects by Bob Greenstreet. New edition of this popular reference work which gives concise and simple guidance through the legal and contractual maze of everyday architectural practice. Price £9.85.

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11. Standard Form of Building Contract (Second edition) by John Parr. Probably the leading text on JCT 80, this has been revised to cover major changes in the law on professional liability, retention monies and interest on unpaid sums. Price £19.75.

12. Construction Law Reports. A new series reporting decisions of the Official Referees Court which are binding on the whole industry. All members of the construction team must keep up to date with these decisions. Available as a subscription: 3 volumes a year £45.00.

13. The Interior Design Workbook: A Job Record and Diary by David Fry FSAIA RIBA. Fills a considerable gap in providing interior designers, with a working tool which sets out all the stages of an interior design project. Price £10.95.

14. Design Liability in the Construction Industry (Second edition) by D. L. Cornes. Includes extensive new material on the law of professional negligence, including the latest cases after *Pirelli*. Price £19.00.

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16. JCT Intermediate Form of Contract: An architect's guide by David Chappell and Vincent Powell-Smith. Practical advice for the architect, clearly set out in simple terms, flowcharts and tables. Studies the roles of all parties involved and covers important topics such as claims and payment in depth. Price £19.80.

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18. Archi-lets Postcards 2 sets of 8 colour cartoons by Louis Hellman. Set 1: Wright, Le Corbusier (twice), Astor, Foster, Graves, Miles and Sirling. Set 2: Gaudi, Mackintosh, Ralph Erskine, Bruce Goff, Charles Moore, Leon Krier, Terry Farrell and Philip Johnson. Price: Set 1: £1.50; Set 2: £2.50.

19. Architects' Data by Ernst Neufert. Available for the first time in paperback, this well-known design guide offers over 400 pages of building types. Price £16.95.

20. Handbook for Clerk of Works (Third Edition) by GLC Department of Architecture and Civic Design. This Third Edition provides step-by-step guidance on the carrying out of all the duties of the Clerk of Works. Price £12.05.

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Experience is not essential and recently qualified applicants will be
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Please write or telephone for an appointment to:

Mr R J Tatton, Administrator
John Spurley and Partners
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West St Helens Street
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Telephone: Abingdon (0235) 229205

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capable of assisting at all stages in the design & supervision of a
wide variety of building projects, the main requirement being the
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Applicants should preferably be qualified to BIArT or H.Tec(Bldg)
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Application forms and job descriptions available from
Borough Architect, Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield,
Middlesex EN1 3XB. Telephone: 01 368 6565 extension
2042.

Closing Date 31-10-86

Ref: GRN/67

London Borough of
Enfield

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Challenging Retail Development roles with dynamic Fashion Retailer

The Property, Design and Construction
Division of The Burton Group provides a full
inhouse technical service in the shopfitting, design
and refurbishment of the Group's stores and shops.

As a result of a substantial expansion
programme, we now have an urgent requirement
for additional project management personnel:

Reporting to a Project Co-ordinator and
working as part of a small team, you will be
responsible for planning, co-ordinating and
supervising shopfitting, building and refurbishment
projects from 'inception' to completion, in any of
the Group's retailing divisions to agreed standards,
costs and time parameters.

Your responsibilities will also include liaison
with inhouse departments, consultants, contractors
and local authorities.

There are a number of positions available and
interested candidates should have a broad based
background in building, shopfitting or construction.

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Tel: 01-405 8787

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depending on experience and qualifications
Working as part of a small enthusiastic architectural team
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provide the full range of architectural services to the
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Following a recent reorganisation, the Department will
shortly be located in the new suite of Civic Offices where it
will be required to produce a demanding and varied
programme of work. This includes a wide range of housing
and a new Sports Centre (£2,000,000) where site work is
about to commence.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate some practical
design experience within a similar environment and be
prepared to accept sole responsibility for smaller projects.
Housing assistance, relocation expenses, essential user car
allowance and support to gain an appropriate qualification
are available.

Write to the Personnel & Management
Services Officer, Manor House, Turners Hill,
Cheshunt, Herts EN8 8LE for further details
and an application form to be returned by
6th November, 1986.

BOROUGH OF BROXBOURNE

WESTERN ISLES HEALTH BOARD

Appointment of

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Salary: £20,000 per annum (negotiable)

Associated with a scheme, for which formal approval has
now been given, to build a new hospital complex in
Stornoway replacing the existing Lewis and County
Hospitals, the Health Board wishes to appoint a Project Co-
ordinator, whose main responsibility will be for the
management and co-ordination of the Health Board's role and
input to the planning, design and execution of the
project, and for its satisfactory completion.

This will be a term contract appointment, commencing
immediately and terminating on final commissioning of the
new hospital building. Appointment will, if envisaged, be
subject to the Administrative and Clerical Staffs and the
General Whitley Council conditions of service, although a
separately negotiated fee-based contract remains a
possibility. Salary will be a fixed level, without the normal
Whitley grading structure, negotiable around £20,000 per
annum.

Knowledge and experience of major building procedures,
particularly those associated with health service building
procurement, will be essential.

Further information, including detailed job description
and application form may be obtained from Mr James
Glover, General Manager, Western Isles Health Board, 37
South Beach Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. Applications
should be returned to the General Manager to reach
him not later than Friday 31st October 1986.

MALLA

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Enthusiastic Architect &
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The successful applicant must be a car owner, will receive a five figure
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59-63 Barton Arcade, Manchester M3 2BD
Tel: 061-834 9664

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Applicants must possess good design sense and a sound
knowledge of building construction. Must be able to carry out
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Newly qualified chartered surveyor or final part 2 standard. Must be
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minimum of supervision.

We require self motivated people and can offer excellent
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Alan Goaling
Quantum Link Associates, 51A George Street
Richmond, Surrey TW9 1HJ

Architectural Assistant

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Plus Large Company Benefits

Our client is the property company of a major
financial institution based in the City of London.
Due to continuing expansion, an additional
experienced architectural assistant is now needed.

The work is varied and interesting and covers a
broad spectrum of design. Applications are invited
from candidates who have some practical
experience and proven ability in preparing detailed
working drawings and specifications in commercial
sector projects. A working knowledge of CAD
would be an advantage, although training will be
given, if necessary. The successful candidate
must be able to work with minimum supervision
within a clearly defined brief and budget.

Please write in the first instance to Elizabeth Lang,
quoting reference 554/CRS, and indicating any
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Arnett House, Hawk Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2NU.

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Applicants should be able to demonstrate proven
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We require a building surveyor to deal with all aspects
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without supervision.

Qualifications preferred but not essential.
Attractive salary by arrangement plus company car.

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Tel: 01-840 2377

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are looking for

QUALIFIED ARCHITECT
— 2 or 3 yrs experience and

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Please write with brief C.V. and 1 or 2 A4 samples of work.

Please contact:
Cherry Michell
P.T. Partnership
Imperial Building
20 Victoria Street
Nottingham NG1 2EX
0602 587095

ABERAVON SEAFRONT DEVELOPMENT, PORT TALBOT

The Authority is actively considering the future development of the Aberavon Seafront Area. Applications are therefore invited from consultant firms with experience in major development projects and who also have experience in Tourism and Leisure based developments, for inclusion of a select list for an initial feasibility study followed by a full development brief and proposals for the future development of the Seafront Area.

Interested firms should apply to: Mr Peter G Collins, Borough Engineer, The Borough of Port Talbot, Municipal Buildings, Port Talbot, West Glamorgan SA12 6JP. Giving full details of their experience and capability, to be returned by Friday 31st October 1986.

The Borough of/Bwrdeistref Port Talbot

Architect Bristol

We have a vacancy in our Premises Division for a qualified Architect in the West Regional Premises Office, based in Bristol. Preference will be given to applicants who have a minimum of five years' post qualification experience and who are interested in new and alteration work. Previous experience in bank work is not essential. The salary is dependent upon qualifications, previous experience and ability, but the commencing salary would be in the range of £13,405-£18,542 (plus a Large Town Allowance of £298 per annum).

The successful candidate will be offered, initially, a three year engagement with the possibility of subsequent appointment to the permanent staff.

In the first instance, please write stating age, qualifications, previous experience and salary required to: A.W. MacDonald Esq Dip Arch ARIBA Chief Architect, Premises Division National Westminster Bank PLC 5th Floor 41 Lothbury London EC2P 2BP

NatWest

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require Part II and Part III
ASSISTANT ARCHITECTS

The work is challenging and fast moving. Applicants must be able to take responsibility and communicate their ideas clearly and concisely both in the office and on site. Write to: Iain Patie Associates, 6 Erskine Road, London NW3 3AJ, or call 01-586 9237.

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(WAT. 125)
£10,794-£12,522 p.a.

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City and District of St Albans

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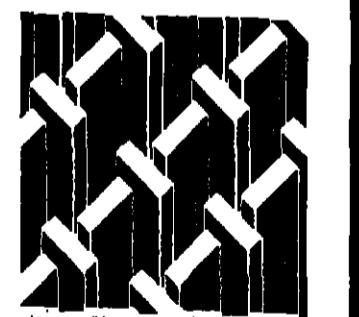
A continuing involvement throughout the country makes our workload both demanding and interesting.

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Senior Architect

£11,952-£12,894

Applications are invited from experienced Architects with design ability allied to sound constructional knowledge for employment in a Department where initiative is encouraged and maximum delegation of project responsibility is given. A casual user car allowance is attached to the post. Allowance with removal and relocation expenses will be provided in approved cases. Temporary housing accommodation may be available within the County area.

The Department has a very varied capital building programme, involving work on all types of educational projects, social service properties, police, fire brigade, court buildings, libraries and other County buildings.

Further details of the salary structure and application form are obtainable from the Department of Architecture, PO10 43 Tessildale House, 108A Borough Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 2HG (Tel: (0642) 248186 ext. 3108). Completed application forms should be returned by 7th November 1986.

We are an equal opportunities employer. Job sharing arrangements will be considered and all applicants whom the support of the Disablment Resettlement Officer will be granted an interview.

FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

PRINCIPAL LECTURER IN ARCHITECTURE

Ref: ABA70

Applications are invited from qualified architects who have a good interest in the teaching of Architectural Technology. The applicants should be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject area of architectural technology and will co-ordinate the group of colleagues contributing to the teaching of the group of subjects making up this field of study. He/she will be expected to teach undergraduate and postgraduate levels and will be encouraged to be active in practice and research. The post is available from 1st January 1987.

Salary scale: £15,894-£19,698
For an informal discussion, please contact Hans Hoedt on 01-9213 ext. 7039.

DEPARTMENT OF TOWN PLANNING LECTURER II/SENIOR LECTURER IN TOWN PLANNING

Ref: ABT3

Applications are invited from qualified town planners with a special interest in urban design and relevant professional experience.

Teaching responsibilities will span a variety of courses from BTec to postgraduate level focusing on environmental design, implementation and local planning. The successful candidate will be expected to undertake a programme of related research.

An interest in housing and an ability to contribute to the rapidly developing departmental and Faculty links with Europe would be advantageous. Candidates should be committed to teaching and research in an inner city Polytechnic. Previous teaching experience at higher degree are desirable but not essential qualification.

Salary scale: £9,705-£14,766 (LII)
£13,725-£16,983 (SL)

Initial placing on this scale will depend on qualifications, experience etc.

For an informal discussion please contact Mike Gibson on 01-928 89 ext. 7007, in the Department of Town Planning.

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

Ref: CEB1

The Centre for Continuing Education in the Building Industry has been established in the Faculty of the Built Environment with the assistance of a grant from PICKUP. It has a comprehensive programme for 1986/87 conferences, short courses and workshops, and a growing programme of 'in house' training for local authorities and firms in the building industry and professions.

Applications are invited for the post of Director of the Centre from those who have the drive and imagination to promote awareness of and further its activities. Applicants should be able to demonstrate an appreciation of the needs for continuing education in the building industry. The post is initially for a period of two years, with the possibility of extension thereafter.

Salary Scale: £13,725-£16,983
(The appointment will be Senior Lecturer grade A of point 10 on the salary scale depending upon experience offered.)

For an informal discussion, please contact Barry Redding on 01-928 89 ext. 7076 or Mike Gibson on 01-928 89 ext. 7007.

Application forms and further details of the above posts are available from the Personnel Department, South Bank Polytechnic, Borough Road, London SE1 0AA. Tel: 01-928 3312 (answering service 9.00am-6.00pm).

Please quote relevant reference number.

Closing date for applications: 10th November 1986.

The Polytechnic is an equal opportunities employer and therefore applications are particularly welcome from women who have the necessary qualifications and experience.

South Bank Polytechnic
Teaching for tomorrow in the heart of London

ATKINS SHEPPARD RIDER AND ASSOCIATES LANDSCAPE (SOUTH WEST)
require a
PRINCIPAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Are you looking for opportunity and challenge? Are you looking for a position of leadership and creativity?

As a leading landscape architecture practice in the South West, Atkins Sheppard Rider and Associates have a strong tradition of landscape architecture, particularly in the field of urban design and regeneration. We are looking for a Principal Landscape Architect to join our team of 150 staff. The post will involve the management of a large and varied workload, including the delivery of major regeneration projects, urban design studies, landscape architecture and environmental management. We are looking for a Principal Landscape Architect to join our team of 150 staff. The post will involve the management of a large and varied workload, including the delivery of major regeneration projects, urban design studies, landscape architecture and environmental management. We are looking for a Principal Landscape Architect to join our team of 150 staff. 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